

# Defining the Atlantic Community

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## **4. Defining the Atlantic Community**

Culture, Intellectuals, and Policies in  
the Mid-Twentieth Century

Edited by Marco Mariano

# **Defining the Atlantic Community**

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*Marco Mariano, Turin, Italy*





# Introduction

*Marco Mariano*

In the course of over ten years of research and debate sponsored by the Bairati Center for Euro-American Studies at the Universities of Turin and Eastern Piedmont on the political, social, and intellectual dimensions of transatlantic relations in the twentieth century, the idea of an Atlantic community has often loomed in the background, either as a historical and geographical space marked by significant exchanges and interactions of ideas and policies, or as a political and cultural construct overlapping with “the West” during the cold war. The protean character and vague contours of this idea account for both its ubiquity in public discourse and the relative lack of scholarly interest in its definition. Historians on both sides of the Atlantic have often resorted to the slippery, ambiguous notion of an Atlantic community as a convenient narrative device—many have assumed it as the obvious, natural framework of their research—but by and large, they have failed to consider it as a legitimate and relevant subject of inquiry. Yet recent developments inside and outside academia suggest that it is time to take this notion seriously.

The end of the cold war prompted a massive discussion about relations between the US and its Western European allies, which in many respects implies a closer and more profound look at the cultural and intellectual dimensions of the Atlantic liaison. While early triumphant accounts of the victory of what once was called the Free World hardly contributed to a critical and detached perspective, subsequent, more sober assessments of the present state and future challenges of “the West” have urged policy makers, commentators, and scholars to deal with issues that were usually taken for granted or conveniently ignored amidst the fog of war. Throughout four decades of East-versus-West ideological warfare, Western elites had invariably insisted that, in addition to the *negative* appeal of anticommunism, a *positive* common denominator was necessary to win the hearts and minds of world public opinion. Now, with the demise of the Soviet threat, redefining the meaning and rationale of the Atlantic partnership is seen as vital to its very survival. However, the post-cold war world has made this search for common ground more difficult than ever, due to diverging foreign policy agendas and expectations at the level of public opinion on both sides of the

## 2 *Marco Mariano*

Atlantic. Meanwhile, in the global arena, the emergence of new powers and the rise of local and global issues along the North-South axis, which are alien to the East-West oriented, state-based perspective of the Atlantic club, have contributed to speculations about an impending “end of the West.” On the other hand, the resilience of Atlantic institutions in a post-cold war order marred by widespread instability and terrorist threats could suggest that the Atlantic community indeed embodied not only common interests but also a shared identity, which apparently did not fade away with the fall of the Berlin Wall.

Asking whether or not we are witnessing just another family quarrel in the relations between the US and its European allies or if we are, in fact, on the verge of a deep transformational crisis with unpredictable consequences is beyond the scope of this work.<sup>1</sup> The present effort was undertaken by historians—most, though not all, historians of American foreign relations—who assume different points of view and methodological perspectives to discuss one of the issues emerging from the current state of transatlantic affairs, namely, the role that culture, intellectuals, and policies played in the definition of the Atlantic community. The point here is to consider this notion as a cultural construct, as the outcome of a deliberate effort to “invent” it, *and* as the product of genuine historical forces, policies, and events. Is the sense of “we-ness” based on shared traditions and values a mere rhetorical device aimed at legitimizing interests and policies, or is it rather a constitutive part of these interests and policies? Is it the expression of a “hegemonic” design by the US toward its allies? How do cultural and historical factors combine with political and security considerations to define the membership of this international “community”? And to what extent is this community “Atlantic”? What is the relationship between a “community” that is historically, geographically, and politically situated and the universalistic values it advocates? What is its relationship with notions—the West, Western civilization—that are often used interchangeably in political discourse? And finally, can we simply dismiss the Atlantic community as a mere by-product of the cold war, or is there something more to be said about it?

These questions are now on the floor not only because it is somehow easier to discuss them after the end of the cold war and because they seem more relevant in the present, troubled situation of the Atlantic order. Two major developments in historical studies during the last decade—the impact of the “cultural turn” of so-called diplomatic history and the rise of the Atlantic history paradigm—also played a role. In fact, they form the major driving force behind this project.

The study of the history of American foreign relations, which had long been a stronghold of methodological conservatism, is now going through a time of change and openness to cutting-edge trends in the profession at large. While celebrations of a “renaissance” may be slightly optimistic, it is unquestionable that the days when the field was “marking time” are gone.<sup>2</sup>

A major consequence of the culturalist influence on historical research writ large has been to undermine the primacy of political history. Depending on the attitude toward such history and the role of the state, works related to the new interest in culture, ideas, and foreign policy by diplomatic historians as well as by scholars from other fields follow approximately three major directions. First, historians retaining the traditional focus of the field on “power,” as well as on states and national elites as the major players in international relations, have incorporated “culture” and/or “ideology” as a vehicle of domestic and international influence or “hegemony.” Second, the cultural turn is being interpreted as an opportunity to rescue the agency of transnational actors from the oblivion of traditional state-centered historiography. Recent studies have brought to light how private and nongovernment organizations, associations, foundations, and other players affect international relations with varying degrees of interaction with states and official diplomacy. Finally, a sort of middle road is being opened by scholars who believe that the significance of the state is a major concern for diplomatic historians, but at the same time expose the limits of old-school, US-centered narratives and call for an “internationalization” of the field by relying on non-US sources and assuming non-US vantage points in order to bring into the picture multiple, previously ignored perspectives.

Such a schematic account is hardly an accurate picture of the state of the field, but it helps explain why historians—who for many years have either contributed to the construction of the Atlantic community, dismissed it as cold war rhetoric, or considered it irrelevant to their research—are now interested in the notion and in a position to decode it.<sup>3</sup>

For those who are interested in the interplay between national identity and foreign policy and the role of ideas as constitutive elements of hegemonic projects at the national and international levels, a closer look at the construction of the Atlantic community offers plenty of food for thought. First, a reading of archival sources—an article of faith among diplomatic historians—that take “culture” seriously reveals how often the latter influenced the worldviews and the very decisions of policy makers “present at the creation” of the Atlantic order. Subjective assumptions about history, geography, status, and national identity have come together in the definition of prevailing notions of national interest, which were usually presented, and have often been studied, as the outcome of rational-choice reasoning. Likewise, as Andrew M. Johnston brilliantly argues, nation-states “contain two competing subjectivities, one as states-like-other-states, with a common interest in sovereignty and security” and the other as nations that “are built around particularist identities . . . constantly articulating images of themselves, in their history texts, political speeches, popular culture, and so on, in order to create the social unity needed to mobilize power for the state, and to differentiate between inside and outside, us and them.” In a context in which states follow a rational-choice approach to power and security and nations are constantly negotiated and contested as “imagined communities,”

foreign policy is best understood as a combination of both processes: the outcome of state bureaucracies operating under utilitarian assumptions believed to be universal as well as the particularist “desire to satisfy unstable internal arguments about the character of the nation itself.”<sup>4</sup>

In fact, the construction of an Atlantic community provides a quite extraordinary repository of rational considerations about national interest and security, as well as symbols and metaphors that are integral to those considerations. However, this notion was by no means unchallenged in the 1940s, a time when different views of the postwar order were competing for power on both sides of Atlantic. How and to what extent did the Atlantic community gain power and influence in the US and Europe? This is when the Gramscian notion of hegemony—by now a classic in culturalist diplomatic history—enters the stage. The Atlantic community first responded to state rationality and national subjectivity in the US, the new hegemonic power whose national identity was being reconfigured in the 1940s as “a state that belonged to a political-economic community of liberal-capitalist states.”<sup>5</sup> At the same time, it also reflected profound transformations and contingent political agendas across the Atlantic. First, the idea of an international community of nations sharing not only political, economic and security interests but also traditions, values, and world-views made US entanglement in European affairs at least acceptable, if not altogether exciting, to the American public. Henry Luce’s quest for US leadership of “the West” as part of the global pursuit of the American century is a case in point.<sup>6</sup> Second, the projection of a communitarian, consensual link among like-minded peoples and nations across the Atlantic alleviated European fears of an American “empire” and contained Americanization within the framework of Western civilization. Third, defining the West as a transatlantic community contextualized the cold war order within the centuries-old, familiar narrative of the East-West divide and made sense of the relations between “the West and the rest” in a truly globalized context. Finally, this notion was flexible enough to allow European allies of the US to see membership in the Atlantic club as respondent to specific national needs.

From this perspective, the culturalist approach, often criticized on the grounds that it mostly shed light on context and representations, seems in fact to be equipped to tackle the issues of power and the role of states; at the same time, it illuminates the interaction between the latter and nonstate actors. Discussing the role of culture and intellectuals implies a close look at civil society, which is crucial for understanding how cultural constructs are shaped, circulated, and contested. As Edward Said wrote in *Orientalism*, “culture . . . is to be found operating within civil society, where the influence of ideas, of institutions, and of other persons works not through domination but by what Antonio Gramsci calls consent.”<sup>7</sup> The focus of this work on culture and intellectuals is based on this understanding of the relationship between culture and power.

The cultural turn has been instrumental to the call for the internationalization of historical studies. The trend is especially evident in US history and is now percolating in the study of American foreign relations. The active involvement of diplomatic historians in the La Pietra project of the Organization of American Historians is telling evidence of the field's positive reaction to the quest for a pluralist and decentered approach to American power stemming from a general critique of old nationalist, insular narratives. At the same time, such internationalization, with a few notable exceptions, seems to be more of a noble dream than a consolidated practice for two major reasons. Multiarchival research is hindered by the fact that access to archives varies dramatically if we compare the situation in the US with that of other nations; furthermore, acquiring in-depth knowledge of the histories, cultures, and languages of different countries is no easy task. What we have, then, is the risk of "methodological regression,"<sup>8</sup> or international history on the cheap. Furthermore, in the specific case of transatlantic relations at mid-century, the quest for internationalization has to deal with the American "preponderance of power" at all levels. As Marilyn Young put it, "de-centering America is a good thing. But it does not of itself create a world free of its overwhelming military and economic power, and it is crucial to remember the difference or the effort to de-center American history will run the danger of obscuring what it means to illuminate."<sup>9</sup> This is all the more so if we consider America's influence abroad during the 1940s. Accordingly, this volume assumes the Atlantic community as a predominantly American product, but it also tries to illustrate how its construction was affected by international and transnational processes and how it was received in specific national cases.

A final assumption behind this project is that the Atlantic community is *not* only a cultural construction but also a political reality based on long-term historical trends and specific policies. The hegemonic power of this notion does not automatically deprive it of any concrete historical significance. It is worth recalling that Said warned that "there were—and are—cultures and nations whose location is in the East, and their lives, histories, and customs have a brute reality obviously greater than anything that could be said about them in the West." In his discussion of Western uses of history and geography in forging the Orient, he insisted that "there is no use in pretending that all we know about time and space, or rather history and geography, is more than anything else imaginative. There are such things as positive history and positive geography . . ." <sup>10</sup> Likewise, we might wonder if there is a "real" Atlantic community and what are its constitutive elements, its boundaries, and the practices that connect its members.

In fact, this project also stems from the booming interest in Atlantic history of the last decade. To some extent, Atlantic history is informed by some of the trends described earlier, namely, the critique of an exclusive focus on the nation-state, the attempt to bring in transnationalism, and finally, the quest for an interdisciplinary effort, especially in the fields of

history and cultural studies. To put it very simply, this approach posits that the Atlantic and its basin in Europe, Africa, and the Americas are parts of a historical and geographic unit of analysis within which a centuries-old exchange network of men, ideas, and goods has generated a “system,” or a set of interrelated systems, that is crucial for understanding the economic, cultural, and political history of the Atlantic area.<sup>11</sup>

If and to what extent the emergence of this paradigm can contribute to understanding transatlantic relations in the twentieth century, however, remains to be seen. Indeed, the outpouring of scholarship on the Atlantic world largely ignores contemporary history for two main reasons. The first has to do with the genealogy of Atlantic history, which has been primarily defined by historians of the transatlantic slave trade, colonial societies in the Americas, and empires. The methodological consequences of this imprinting are self-evident: the nation-state, for example, is certainly not a major concern for practitioners of this field, yet it is fundamental for the study of twentieth-century transatlantic relations.

The second problem, I believe, has to do with presentism. During World War II and the early cold war years, a very different strain of Atlantic history had emerged out of concerns that had more to do with the international political context than with the inner dynamics of the historical profession. When Columbia historian Carlton Hayes, in his address as president of the American Historical Association in 1945, advocated an “Atlantic community” perspective on US history against what he saw as the narrow parochialism of the profession, he explicitly drew on Walter Lippmann’s idea of the Atlantic world as a community of nations sharing both the values of “Western civilization” and security interests. Ten years later, Robert Palmer and Jacques Godechot attempted to make a sweeping generalization of their Atlantic paradigm from the eighteenth to the twentieth centuries. They saw the cold war as a moment when the US and Europe were finally coming together again after the long disaffection that had followed what Palmer defined as the era of democratic revolution. As they wrote in 1955, “there will be a renewal in the future and a development, not only of an Atlantic diplomatic alliance but also of a Western or Atlantic civilization.”<sup>12</sup>

I believe that the present reluctance among historians to apply the Atlantic history framework to the twentieth century reflects a widespread uneasiness with the presentism of that strain of Atlantic history, which was informed by an idea of Western civilization that “owed more to NATO than it did to Plato.”<sup>13</sup> This uneasiness is largely justified. In fact, history and cultural studies of the last decade have been successfully incorporating areas and perspectives like Africa and its relation to Europe and the Americas, Latin America, and the Caribbean, slavery and race, class, and other previously ignored issues. Thanks to their efforts, the field is now more inclusive and diverse than ever. At the same time, we might now wonder if and to what extent we can move past the ghosts of the cold war and approach transatlantic relations in the twentieth century from a critical,

rather than apologetic, Atlantic perspective. The point here is not to “set the record straight,” that is, to rescue some “authentic” Atlantic/Western civilization from the oversimplified, distorted grand narrative that Norman Davies has defined “the Allied scheme of history.”<sup>14</sup> Rather, the point is to verify whether an Atlantic history paradigm can contribute to understanding transatlantic relations in the twentieth century. Single contributions by scholars working on different topics and adopting different methodologies suggest that to some extent, the Atlantic basin can be seen as a unit of analysis far beyond the threshold of the early nineteenth century, the end of empires, and the wave of independence in the Americas.

At the geopolitical and economic levels, Rafe Blaufarb has shown how the collapse of the Spanish Empire in the Americas triggered a competition among European powers and the US for influence and access to markets. This had significant implications for the distribution of power—at the international level among the major players involved and at the domestic level within the new Latin American republics. The impact of this “Western Question” on the Atlantic world, at least for the first half of the nineteenth century, deserves further investigation.<sup>15</sup> The integration within this world throughout the nineteenth century was obviously weakened by the decline of the slave trade, the rise of nation-states, and the divide between American republics and European monarchies. Still, trade continued to provide a major vehicle of integration in the Atlantic basin. Starting in the 1820s and 1830s, commercial treaties allowed for the participation of Latin American nations in the world economy and provided a bridge over the ideological divide between Restoration and republicanism, while the introduction of steam engines paved the way toward a revolution in transatlantic transportation and communication.<sup>16</sup>

During the second half of the nineteenth century, developments within the US helped shape what Daniel Rodgers has described as a North Atlantic landscape. As steamships made transatlantic travel affordable to middle- and upper-class American tourists, their Grand Tour experience helped erode the old Republican vision of the opposition between the New World and the Old. Meanwhile, post-Civil War economic growth further integrated the US into a “North Atlantic economy” in which similar developments typical of modern industrial societies and the exchange of goods, capital, management, and production techniques provided several common links between the US and Europe. “Late-nineteenth-century Essen, Manchester, Lille and Pittsburgh were not merely similar phenomena, not merely parallel independent developments. They were all part of the furiously expanding world market . . . What struck those who traversed the industrial regions of the Old and the New Worlds was not their difference but their extraordinary sameness.”<sup>17</sup> These developments might be usefully tackled as part of the broader issue of distinct but analogous “trajectories of modernization” within the “Atlantic system,” although efforts in this direction are infrequent.<sup>18</sup>



Finally, with turn-of-the-century Anglo-American rapprochement, “identities of opposition gradually gave way to narratives of compatibility” between the US and Europe in international relations as well. Charles Kupchan has argued that the early decades of the twentieth century saw a transition from “militarized rivalry” to “peaceful coexistence,” which was an important step toward the “cooperative security” inaugurated in the 1940s.<sup>19</sup>

While these assumptions inform the choice to discuss the “Atlantic community” mostly, though not exclusively, from the perspective of culture and ideas, they by no means reflect the methodological orientations of all the contributors to this volume. In fact, *Defining the Atlantic Community* brings together scholars from varied backgrounds and methodological approaches who offer different, and at times divergent, perspectives on the notion of Atlantic community.

The first part focuses on American policy makers, intellectuals, and their ideas, with an emphasis on how domestic factors and internal developments shaped an Atlantic vision of Europe within the US. Ronald Steel discusses the crucial role that leading columnist and public intellectual Walter Lippmann played in the construction of Atlantic community as a concept that reinterpreted US relations with Europe and redefined the West as a US-led “sphere of influence.” Frank Ninkovich assesses postwar US attitudes and policies toward Europe in the light of prewar intellectual traditions of US foreign policy; he argues that nineteenth-century liberalism, more than Wilsonianism, accounts for the US tendency to situate relations with Europe within a global framework. Emiliano Alessandri explores how religion contributed to the cultural construction of the Atlantic community and argues that “Christian Atlanticism” as a religious interpretation of American internationalism should not be dismissed as a by-product of the cold war. Finally, Marco Mariano discusses the Atlantic community as a metageographic concept illustrating a shift in the *place* of the US in world affairs—a shift that tracked changes in national identity in wartime America.

The second part is devoted more closely to the interaction between the New World and the Old, as it deals with policies and narratives—mostly, but not exclusively, originating in the US and targeting Europe—that were relevant to the construction of a “European Atlantic community.” Maurizio Vaudagna analyzes ideas about and policies on “social protection” as a constitutive element of the Atlantic community during World War II, and emphasizes how Western powers struggled to “steal the thunder” of social security from antidemocratic traditions of social welfare. David Ellwood situates the conceptualization of the Atlantic community within the context of American geopolitical grand narratives and compares its effectiveness with that of the Marshall Plan as a vehicle of US “soft power” in Europe throughout the postwar years, with a coda on contemporary developments in transatlantic relations. Giles Scott-Smith looks at the activism



of intellectuals engaged in the battleground of ideas in the early cold war years. He focuses on the case of Congress for Cultural Freedom as a vehicle for the exercise of US hegemony in Europe and for the nurturing of a transatlantic elite within the context of “American empire.”

Finally, the third part examines how the idea of Atlantic community was received, negotiated, and contested outside the US by discussing four national cases located in very different positions along the center/periphery spectrum of the Atlantic world. Kathleen Burk discusses Britain as the *primus inter pares* among the European allies of the US who looked with skepticism at the American idea of Atlantic community, and shows how the British evolved the belief that their national interests would be best served if Britain acted as a bridge between two worlds, rather than as a member of an integrated Euro-American entity. At the opposite end of the Atlantic spectrum, Mario Del Pero explains that Italy sought acceptance within the Atlantic club as an “emancipative bond,” that is, a source of security that was crucial to restoring its sovereignty after fascism and the defeat in World War II. Yuichi Hosoya illustrates how mutual security concerns gradually led the US and Japan toward an arrangement that virtually transformed the latter into an outpost of “the West” in the Far East/Pacific region in the context of the global cold war. Finally, Loris Zanatta, arguing from the South Atlantic viewpoint of Argentina, discusses how Juan Domingo Peron tried to develop a “third position,” that is, a Catholic, Latin, and Hispanic alternative to the Anglo-Saxon Atlantic community.

## NOTES

1. For an exhaustive view of the current debate on transatlantic relations, see John Ikenberry, “Explaining Crisis and Change in Transatlantic Relations: An Introduction,” in *The End of the West? Crisis and Change in the Transatlantic Order*, ed. Jeffrey Anderson, John Ikenberry, and Thomas Risse (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2008).
2. Charles Maier, “Marking Time: The Historiography of American Foreign Relations,” in *The Past Before Us: Contemporary Historical Writing in the United States*, ed. Michael Kammen (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1980).
3. See Valerie Aubourg, Gerard Bossuat, and Giles Scott-Smith, eds., *European Community, Atlantic Community?* (Paris: Soleb, 2008); and Tiziano Bonazzi, ed., *Quale Occidente: Occidente perché* (Soveria Mannelli: Rubbettino, 2005) as demonstrations of the increasing interest in the subject, especially among European scholars of US history.
4. Andrew M. Johnston, *Hegemony and Culture in the Origins of NATO Nuclear First-Use, 1945–1955* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 9–10.
5. *Ibid.*, 10.
6. Nikhil Pal Singh, “Culture/Wars: Recoding Empire in a Age of Democracy,” *American Quarterly* 50 (September 1998): 479–80.
7. Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978), 7.

8. Mario Del Pero, "On the Limits of Zeiler's Historiographical Triumphalism," *Journal of American History* 95 (March 2009): 1081.
9. Marilyn B. Young, "The Age of Global Power," in *Rethinking American History in a Global Age*, ed. Thomas Bender (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 291.
10. Said, *Orientalism*, 5, 55.
11. Bernard Bailyn, *Atlantic History: Concept and Contours* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005). See also David Armitage, "Three Concepts of Atlantic History," in *The British Atlantic World, 1500–1800*, ed. David Armitage and Michael J. Braddick (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2002); Allison Games, "Atlantic History: Definitions, Challenger and Opportunities," *American Historical Review* 111 (June 2006): 741–57; William O'Reilly, "Genealogies of Atlantic History," *Atlantic Studies* 1 (2004): 66–84.
12. Quoted in Bernard Bailyn, "The Idea of Atlantic History," *Itinerario* 20, no. 1 (1996): 28.
13. Armitage, "Three Concepts of Atlantic History," 14.
14. This seems to be the focus of David Gress, *From Plato to NATO: The Idea of the West and its Opponents* (New York: Free Press, 1998). Norman Davies, *Europe: A History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 22–25 provides an insightful look at the instrumental use of "Western civilization" on the idea of Europe.
15. Rafe Blaufarb, "The Western Question: The Geopolitics of Latin American Independence," *American Historical Review* 112 (June 2007): 742–63.
16. Marcello Carmagnani, *L'Altro Occidente* (Turin: Einaudi, 2003), 131–40; Paul Butel, *Histoire de l'Atlantique de l'antiquité à nos jours* (Paris: Perrin, 1997), 243.
17. Daniel T. Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings: Social Politics in a Progressive Age* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1998), 44.
18. Hans-Jürgen Puhle, "Trajectories of Western Modernization Around the Atlantic," in *Atlantic History: History of the Atlantic System 1580–1830*, ed. Horst Pietschmann (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2002).
19. Charles Kupchan, "Atlantic Order in Transition: The Nature of Change in US-European Relations," in *End of the West?* 116.

## Part I

# American Vistas



# 1 How Europe Became Atlantic

## Walter Lippmann and the New Geography of the Atlantic Community

*Ronald Steel*

### A STRUCTURED CONCEPT

The phrase “Atlantic community” has become such a familiar part of our political rhetoric that we rarely question either its meaning or the purpose it serves. The phrase itself suggests shared goals, family values, mutually rewarding benefits and responsibilities. It lies at the foundations of our mental maps of the world and of the role that we play in that world. Within these mental maps, the waters between Europe and North America have come to be seen as a bridge rather than a barrier between the two parts of a common homeland.

Like many constructions, both physical and mental, it periodically requires repair, redefinition, and even reconsideration. It also suffers from the tensions of expansion and contraction as new members join or older ones mutate or even reconsider the terms of their allegiance. The very vagueness of the concept—an artificial “community” divided by thousands of miles; split into a congeries of different tongues, customs, and identities; and stitched together over decades of changing political and military circumstances—raises questions of its inherent artificiality and its durability.

For its advocates, “community” is the description of a common civilization with ancient roots, loyalties, traditions, tongues, and faiths—an entity both natural and inevitable. For its critics, however, the concept is largely rhetoric: a mask for American hegemony over Europe and a cold war cliché that conceals political realities. The concept, however it is approached, is one based not only on ideas and cultures, but also on power and interests.

It is not a natural concept, but rather a structured political one. Sired by war, it has been vitalized by fear, fed by dependency on one side and the will to control on the other, and sustained by a European proclivity to weakness and an American drive to power. The relationship is one of a mutually rewarding codependency. This is the unacknowledged secret of its resilience and longevity.

The Atlantic alliance provides the military foundation of this larger entity optimistically described as the “community.” It endures because it serves a useful function, though one periodically affected by stress and

mutation. While the United States—through its economic, military, and political power—dominates the “community,” that entity is as much a European as an American creation.

For the Americans, on the most basic level, it was organized to prevent Europe from being dominated by a single power—whether one actively hostile or only potentially so. The Americans entered the European political equation to establish a viable balance of power that the Europeans themselves could not sustain. Two cataclysmic wars within the thirty-year period from 1914 to 1944 had made it clear that Europeans lacked the will—or the power or the skill—to live peacefully without endangering themselves and others.

The alliance, or the wider but amorphous “community” that was spun around it like a decorative and enveloping web, has been of equal—or even greater—value to Europeans than to Americans. It allowed them, particularly if they acted in concert, not only to benefit from American initiatives they found useful, but also to impede those they considered potentially disadvantageous to Europe. The fact that it was a protective relationship in which one side received the protection while the other—in its own interests, to be sure—delivered it, did not in any way reduce its utility, even though it produced periodic disagreements and tensions.

The American connection also provided a solution of sorts to the two dilemmas that had beset Europe for the better part of a century. One was the German Problem—that is, finding a place for Germany where its energies and ambitions could be harnessed in a manner that did not threaten its neighbors, as well as itself, and might even be used in a mutually beneficial way.

The other dilemma was the Russian Problem. This was not a new development in Europe. It dated back to the time of the tsars. But it emerged in a new form after World War II when, as a result of German aggression under Nazi rule, the Russians not only reversed the humiliations and destruction imposed upon them during the war, but gained control of a buffer zone in the eastern part of the continent. Only the Americans were in a position to challenge what anxious Europeans feared might be an extension of Russian political, if not military, power into Western Europe. The New World, as has been said of an earlier disequilibrium, was brought in to restore the balance of the Old World.

The Atlantic connection—both the community and the alliance to which it was linked—had considerable advantages for the United States. It served first as a useful instrument to focus Europe within an Atlantic framework subject to a high degree of American influence. While some Europeans chafed at this dependency and even, like Charles de Gaulle, publicly denounced it, most Europeans were quite willing to accept it because the advantages seemed to significantly outweigh the disadvantages. This was particularly true in the area of defense: a realm that the Europeans were unwilling to finance and the Americans eager to provide because it offered

advance bases for the projection of American power in the global struggle that came to be known as the cold war.

The alliance also secondly served as a means to pacify a Europe prone to violence and political extremism. The United States had to intervene no fewer than three times in the first half of the twentieth century to restore a political balance that Europeans lacked the will or the ability to maintain for themselves. This pacification was, to be sure, accomplished within a structure under American direction and control. Such control was essential not only to achieve American foreign policy goals, but also to secure the domestic support that the commitment entailed. Americans had to be assured that this entangling relationship was not only desirable but necessary. The refusal of the US Senate in 1919 to endorse Woodrow Wilson's idealistic, but vaporous and ineptly handled, plans for world peace weighed heavily on the decisions made by American policy makers in 1945.

In addition to its other functions, the ostensible community was designed to prevent the European states or any postwar European political construction from pursuing policies or assuming an identity hostile to American interests. For obvious reasons this was never explicitly stated in alliance documents and pronouncements, but it was inherent in the very structure of the organization. It is for this reason that American officials throughout the long cold war period proclaimed, and continue to proclaim even to this day, that "America is a European power." The intended audience for this problematic avowal is more European than it is American. Despite its fraternal connotations, it means that the United States is intent on playing a major role in European affairs.

Third, the Atlantic connection has ensured that Europe would serve as an advance base for the projection of American military power and influence. This function became strikingly apparent during the 1940s and 1950s when the American military presence in Europe was revealed to be not a holdover from World War II, but rather an open-ended and seemingly permanent arrangement. European leaders, with a few notable exceptions, accepted this willingly because it did not seem to impinge meaningfully on their autonomy, and it spared them the considerable costs of maintaining a significant military force of their own. There were, however, other problems that European governments had to overcome—including serious domestic dissent from groups on both the left and the right. These critics opposed what they viewed as a dangerous dependency on the United States.

## AMERICA'S EUROPE

Although some form of transatlantic entity was inevitable for both political and economic reasons, the form it took was not. The mutation of a military alliance into a "community" was a construction project that required

a major reinterpretation of the military, political, economic, and cultural links between the United States and Europe.

The United States came into being as a non-European, or even an anti-European, power. Indeed, for many eighteenth-century Americans in search of religious and political freedom or an escape from poverty and servitude, it represented a rejection of Europe. America offered, in the words of the late eighteenth-century patriot Tom Paine, a chance to “begin the world anew.”

While Americans are mostly of European descent (though increasingly less so in recent decades), they are in fact a mixture of cultures and races. This is much truer today than at any time since the nation’s founding. The values and structures of American society—individualism, democracy, religious and cultural diversity, the absence of an established national church—are in sharp contrast to European traditions. Immigrants have come to America in order to leave behind them the nations of their origins. It has represented a chance to start life over again—not to replicate it in a different longitude.

From its inception, and well into the twentieth century, most Americans have been wary of being drawn into European quarrels. When they have done so, it has been because they were persuaded by their leaders that their well-being was at stake. But as commercial interests increasingly drew Americans abroad in search of profit and influence, so did they contribute to the belief that these interests required military protection. By the 1890s, barely a century after its founding, the United States was the world’s leading industrial power. This fed the quasi-religious concept of Manifest Destiny, with its implication that it was not only possible but necessary for the United States to play a global role of leadership and inspiration.

The long-standing belief that America must stand apart from Europe’s incessant wars and orgies of self-destruction was gradually undermined in the early twentieth century by elites—mostly based in the banks and industries of the Northeastern states—motivated by a different conception of American interests and the benefits of an entangling role for American power. For example, Andrew Carnegie, the immigrant steel baron and one of the richest men in America, went so far as to propose a merger between the United States and Great Britain.

Political ambition also played an important role. Impelled by the logic of the new concept of geopolitics, the strategist Alfred Thayer Mahan drew on this logic to propose the unity of English-speaking peoples to guard the world’s sea lanes. At issue, he argued, was “whether the Eastern or Western civilization is to dominate throughout the earth to control its future.” Similarly, the nineteenth-century American historian Henry Adams urged “building up a great community of Atlantic powers.”<sup>1</sup>

This vague ambition became a reality following the outbreak of the war that engulfed Europe in 1914 and spread across the Atlantic by 1917. Anglophile groups, largely centered in the northeastern seaboard states and



fortified by historical ties and cultural affinities, urged alliance with Britain. Even more important was the pressure from Wall Street bankers who had made enormous loans to their British partners—loans that they would lose were Britain to be defeated.

Such pressure was fortified by the concerns of strategists that a German victory would create a continental power bloc capable of challenging American and British interests in the South Atlantic. These interests had been explicitly congruent since the Monroe Doctrine of 1823, when the British fleet had become the effective guardian of an American economic and political presence in the Western Hemisphere.

Although Woodrow Wilson had declared that America must remain neutral in the European war, this avowal was a hope rather than a pledge. It was belied by his willingness to respect Britain's blockade of German ports, its seizure of cargoes bound for the Central Powers, its mining of the North Sea to prevent neutral trade, and the blacklisting of American firms conducting business with Germany and its allies. The task for American interventionists was to find a compelling argument for bringing America into the European power balance. Economic interests clearly were not enough. They chose to link their argument to American security as well as American sympathies.

A key role in performing this task fell to a small but influential American journal with the deliberately Platonic title of *The New Republic*. Energetically reformist in approach and iconoclastic in style, it enjoyed a progressive and politically influential following. One of its young editors, Walter Lippmann, who in later years became America's most influential political columnist, took the lead in making a powerful argument that cut across emotional and financial ties.

America, he maintained in one of his numerous prointervention editorials, was an integral part of the community of nations bordering the Atlantic. An attack on that community was therefore a threat to America's own security. Germany's war against Britain and France was, he insisted, not only an act of aggression, but a war "against a civilization of which we are a part." By imperiling the "vital highways of the world" through submarine warfare, Germany posed an intolerable threat to what he labeled the "Atlantic community," thus coining a phrase that was to stick.<sup>2</sup>

With this formulation a distant conflict among imperial states that Americans had determinedly avoided was now put into the wider context of a hypothetical Atlantic community. According to this line of reasoning those who sought a cautious neutrality in a power struggle among European imperial states were deemed guilty of "irresponsibility." Hammered home by Lippmann and other energetic interventionists, this argument made a powerful impact on American thinking at the time and during the decades that followed. It established the rationale for the later expansion of that "community" during the cold war into the geographically unbounded Free World under American leadership.

The aim of this policy, Lippmann explained to skeptical readers of the journal in 1917, was “not to conquer Germany . . . but to win Germany . . . [for] union with our civilization . . . lure her back to the civilization in which she belongs [for] . . . we are in fact one great community.”<sup>33</sup> Thus was the involvement that most Americans had sought to avoid put into a virtuous and reassuring Atlantic context. And thus neutrality, and even what the *New Republic* had earlier admitted was in fact “differential neutrality” favorable to Britain, came to be deemed as “irresponsibility.”<sup>34</sup>

Linking America’s economic and cultural ties to its security interests, Lippmann argued that “we cannot betray the Atlantic Community by submitting” to a German aggression that would make Germany the leader of a “coalition against the Atlantic world.” Employing the new language of geopolitics, Lippmann maintained that Germany, by cutting the “vital highways of our world,” threatened the very existence of the “Atlantic Community.” The implication was clear and explicitly spelled out: “the safety of the Atlantic highway is something for which we should fight.”<sup>35</sup>

The essence of the argument—a novel and even contentious one at the time—was that because America is an Atlantic power, as is Great Britain (notwithstanding Britain’s vast and globally dispersed colonial empire), the two nations have common vital interests. For this reason, any assault on an integral part of that community represents a threat to American security. Germany could, he argued, become a part of the Atlantic world simply by not threatening Britain.

Thus did Lippmann, skillfully if disingenuously, link American security to the balance of power in Europe—a link that most Americans had deliberately avoided since the earliest days of the republic. He justified this by placing it in a familiar and reassuring Atlantic context. The political virtue of this concept was that it combined long-standing cultural affinities with the new concept of security. This affinity was useful to a rising power possessed of an elite harboring global ambitions and eager to pursue them.

The concept of “community” was later expanded from the Atlantic to a global scale as continent-spanning America supplanted Great Britain as global imperial power. What Lippmann had defined in 1917 as the “Atlantic world” became the amorphous, multiethnic, multicultural, territorially unlimited Free World. Although this concept was geographically delineated, it was defined in cultural–ideological terms that ignored traditional boundaries and blurred its political identity. During the cold war, the self-defined and geographically flexible Free World ultimately became the American imperial terrain following the demise of Europe as a major global actor. Following World War II, what publisher Henry Luce later described as the American Century rested on the identification of the United States as the inheritor, promulgator, and defender of Western values.

## REDEFINING THE ATLANTIC COMMUNITY

During the interwar period from 1919 to 1939, the concept of an Atlantic community faded into virtual irrelevance as European democracies foundered and America, grappling with economic depression, retreated into isolationism. Woodrow Wilson's vision of an international body to keep the peace had failed both because European democracies were unable to defend their interests, not to mention their principles, and because Wilson could not ground his principles in a meaningful geographic framework and convincingly relate them to American security.

The descent of Europe into anarchy, revolution, and fascism reinforced the belief among most Americans that security lay not in identification with Europe but rather in separation from it. This was true even of Lippmann, the intellectual father of the Atlantic community. It was reinforced by the willingness of Britain and France to abandon democratic Czechoslovakia to German aggression rather than cut across ideological boundaries and seek a necessary alliance with Russia. "The masters of British policy," he explained to his readers in 1943, sought security "by abandoning the Russian connection at Munich in a last vain hope that Germany and Russia would fight and exhaust on another."<sup>6</sup> Instead, the democracies made a pact with the devil in which they became the feast at the table.

The Nazi-Soviet pact, the fall of France to German armies in 1940 and the consequent isolation of Great Britain were a powerful shock to those Americans who had believed that the United States could stand aside from the European conflict and not be endangered. Lippmann, for his part, was forced to repudiate his own counsel of "armed neutrality." Faced with the collapse of France, the isolation of Britain, and the threat to America's own hemispheric and global interests, he returned to the argument he had made in 1917: "the safety of the Atlantic highway" was something for which America should fight.

This sweeping extension of American interests, after the disillusionments and political withdrawal of the 1920s and 1930s, could be made persuasive to skeptical Americans only by grounding it in the more familiar argument of security. Instead of choosing detachment from a war-prone and politically unstable Europe, Americans had to be convinced that they could find security only in identification with—and responsibility for—the continent. This required a major effort of political salesmanship. The daring involved in this effort should not be underestimated. Nor should the opposition it aroused among American nationalists who were summarily, and often inaccurately, tarred as "isolationists."

In opposition to those who sought to insulate America from the European conflagration, a group of influential Atlanticists moved to sway public opinion. Among the most important of these was the New York-based Century Group, a collection of businessmen, financiers, and journalists who formed an offshoot of the better-known Committee to Defend America by

Aiding the Allies. The group presented to President Roosevelt a legal brief designed to help him circumvent the Neutrality Acts so that American ships and supplies could be sent to Britain.

Following the Japanese attack in December 1941 on American bases in the Pacific and Germany's declaration of war on the United States, Americans were inescapably drawn into the balance of power in Europe. To help navigate the future of that relationship, Lippmann in 1943 wrote a short but powerful book. Although it bore the deceptively bland title *U.S. Foreign Policy*, it presented an architectural blueprint for the postwar world. In some respects, the content was similar to the argument he had first made in 1917. He explained to a new generation of Americans that the "Atlantic Ocean is not the frontier between Europe and the Americas," but rather the "inland sea of a community of nations allied with one another by geography, history and vital necessity."<sup>7</sup>

Expanding the geography of American security, he maintained that the continental limits of the United States were not identical with its defensive frontiers; rather, the true area of American security was both the landmass of North America and also an "Atlantic Community" that he sweepingly defined as embracing the component parts of the far-flung British commonwealth, including Australia and New Zealand, all of South America, and the colonies of Spain, Portugal, France, Belgium, Holland, and Denmark. The continental limits of the United States, he maintained in the language of expansive new doctrine of national security, "have never corresponded with the defensive frontiers of the United States."<sup>8</sup> Deliberately absent from this loose and problematic "community" were the states of Eastern Europe, which he conceded must remain neutral in order that the United States and the Soviet Union could maintain what he called their wartime "nuclear alliance."

By 1944 the tides of war made urgent a more precise definition of the postwar world. Lippmann responded by publishing another short book he prosaically but pointedly entitled *U.S. War Aims*. In it he warned against an unrealistic exuberance regarding such exaggerated "aims." He had good reason to do so. Even as the Russian armies, having turned the tide of war in the battle of Stalingrad, were pushing the German invaders back through Eastern Europe, the British and the Americans had not yet sent their armies across the channel. Geographical facts were narrowing political ambitions. Lippmann adjusted to this military reality by defining the Atlantic community less grandly. Although that "community" was an oceanic system,<sup>9</sup> it should not be conceived, he wrote, to include Eastern Europe. There could be no realistic effort to deny Russia its strategic sphere of influence in the space between its borders and Germany. That had been tried with disastrous results in 1939.

By stressing the limits as well as the sweep of the Atlantic community, he called for a frank recognition of spheres of influence—or what he described as "regional constellations."<sup>10</sup> To maintain peace after the defeat of the

aggressors, he argued, it was as important to define what lay beyond the Atlantic community as what lay within it. The area beyond, he made clear, was the Russian orbit. “Whether there is to be a third World War in the twentieth century depends upon whether the Russians would come to rest within their orbit and the Atlantic states within theirs, and whether they would then concert their policies toward Japan and Germany.”<sup>11</sup>

Turning his back on a lingering Wilsonianism that put its faith in a still-nonexistent world organization to keep the peace in the postwar world, Lippmann argued that peace had to rest on cooperation among the great powers and respect for spheres of influence. Peace would be guarded by those states with the power to maintain it. The Wilsonian policy of self-determination of diverse ethnic groups, this former admirer of Woodrow Wilson now declared, denied the belief that diverse peoples could live peacefully together. It was a reactionary doctrine that “can be and has been used to promote the dismemberment of practically every organized state.” At its worst it was in fact a “license to intervention and aggression.”<sup>12</sup>

As World War II drew to a close, an agreement among the victors on the shape of postwar Europe became urgent. Many, like Lippmann, believed that it should be structured on a continuation of the wartime partnership among America, Britain, and Russia—one which, as he had written, “does not call for a permanent American military intervention.”<sup>13</sup> This was, in fact, the intended basis of the 1945 Yalta accords worked out by Roosevelt, Churchill, and Stalin.

Roosevelt, distrusting an unstable and unreliable France and determined to avoid British efforts to entangle the United States in Europe permanently, hoped to transform Great Britain and the Soviet Union into cooperative guardians. “Like Jefferson,” as John Lamberton Harper wrote, “FDR was less interested in saving Europe from itself than in rescuing the rest of the world from Europe.”<sup>14</sup> His means for doing so assumed not only Russian cooperation, but also that a financially bankrupt Britain, with its loosening grip on such wealth-producing colonies as India, was in fact capable of playing such a role. As for Germany, which had twice within twenty-five years drawn America into European wars, his solution was permanent disarmament.

However, Roosevelt’s sudden death in April 1945 and Russia’s imposition of harsh control over the territories in Eastern Europe, from which it had expelled the German armies, led to a sharp change in American policy and to the drawing of a political-ideological-military line in the center of the continent. This new confrontation found dramatic expression in Churchill’s grim description—from an American podium in March 1946 with the approving new American president, Harry Truman, at his side—of a growing challenge to the West caused by a Soviet-imposed Iron Curtain severing Europe “from the Baltic to the Adriatic.”<sup>15</sup>

This martial call for a militarized “fraternal association of English-speaking peoples,”<sup>16</sup> supported by the new administration in Washington, overwhelmed Roosevelt’s goal of a Great Power condominium that

would spare America from costly future involvements in European wars. It marked a repudiation of the Yalta formula under which the wartime allies had pledged to cooperate in the management of the areas under their control. This confirmed, as Lippmann had warned in 1943, that “a failure to form an alliance between the vanquished and the victors will mean the formation of alliances between the vanquished and some of the victors.”<sup>17</sup>

## SPHERES OF INFLUENCE

Although this confrontation meant the end of one ambition, it also meant the beginning of another. There would not be “one world,” as the defeated 1944 presidential candidate Wendell Willkie had written in his greatly admired book of that title. Nor would there be the glorious dawn of an American Century in which the United States would “assume the leadership of the world,” as publisher Henry Luce had exuberantly predicted in a book so welcomed by Americans that it sold a remarkable one million copies.<sup>18</sup> Yet there remained one seemingly feasible and desirable alternative: an Atlantic community under American leadership and control.

But this kind of community inevitably meant that the Soviets, faced with the loss of their own *cordon sanitaire*, would remain in Eastern Europe and the areas of Germany under their occupation. This was precisely what George Kennan, a key American policy planner and Russian expert, had sought to avoid. An ardent Germanophile, Kennan viewed the Germans as the “natural leaders and political unifiers of Europe.”<sup>19</sup> Indeed, he had once injudiciously declared that “the only problem with the New Order” sought by the German regime in the Nazi era “was that it was Hitler’s New Order.”<sup>20</sup>

Such rhetorical overkill also marked his 1947 “containment” dispatch from Moscow in which he called for a virtual American military confrontation with the Soviet Union. This so shocked Walter Lippmann that he described Kennan’s formula to his readers as a “strategic monstrosity.”<sup>21</sup> Despite Kennan’s proclivity toward rhetorical excess, such statements reflected Kennan’s goal of a European construction free from both Soviet and American control—free, that is, from what Charles de Gaulle viewed as a double hegemony. Where Kennan differed from the General was in seeing a tamed Germany, not a politically unstable France, as the natural leader of Europe. But Kennan was a Germanophile in a post-Roosevelt American government dominated by Anglophiles—precisely as it had been in 1917.

Kennan’s State Department superior Dean Acheson, the architect of American foreign policy in the late 1940s and early 1950s, was by contrast an ardent Atlanticist opposed to any notion of Europe as a third force. Like Jean Monnet, a French businessman with a dream of European unification and powerful American business and government connections, he sought

instead a unified Western Europe that would be a reliable partner and protectorate of the United States. For him, that partnership rested on the creation of a Western European federation. This ambition put him solidly in opposition to any European construction that was not based on the United States as its guarantor and dominant member.

The key problem in restructuring the postwar world was to find a place for Germany where its energies could be harnessed for the benefit of all and its proclivity toward aggression curbed. Germany could not be isolated or left to its own devices. For Lippman, the only real alternatives were either a place in the Atlantic community or in what he called the “Russian orbit.” Yet the latter alternative was neither viable nor realistic. Not only would it be a threat to the states of Eastern Europe, but it would also be a “dangerous and menacing internal enemy of the Soviet Union.”<sup>22</sup>

In Lippmann’s view, Europe was less a fragile plant to be nurtured than a potentially dangerous growth that had to be contained. For this reason, he argued that an all-European federation would not be a viable alternative as some imagined, but rather a “great evil.” The reason for this was that Germany “would hold the strategic center of the federation” and the “core of any European army.” The clear result would be to “make the Continent a regional system dominated by Germany”—precisely what the Allies were fighting a war to prevent. It was only “on the foundation of security, obtainable by forming the Atlantic Community and the Russian Orbit,” he explained, “that an economic and cultural federation is possible.”<sup>23</sup>

Indeed, he pointed out the obvious fact that at a time when British and American forces had still not yet sent their armies across the channel to combat the *Wehrmacht*, and the Russians were carrying the brunt of the land war, Moscow would have a powerful voice in the coming postwar settlement. The inescapable reality, he explained, was that “Russia exists in, and depends upon, a region of strategic security separate from the Atlantic powers.” For this reason, it was “bound to consider the region eastward from Germany as a separate system of security.”<sup>24</sup>

But this was not the intention of officials in Washington. Rather than such a Russian “orbit” or sphere of influence “separate from the Atlantic powers,” they sought a continent open to American economic investment and political influence. The first major step toward achieving this goal was taken in May 1947 when President Harry Truman convened a dramatic joint session of Congress and called for an American military aid program to the royalist Greek government in its effort to suppress native-led and communist-aided opposition forces.

Although the plan initially seemed limited—a relatively modest \$400 million, which included aid for Turkey as well—the language he used was far more sweeping in its implications. “It must be the policy of the United States,” Truman declared, to “support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures.”<sup>25</sup> With these vague but infinitely flexible words the American government



launched—under what became known as the Truman Doctrine—a policy of global military, political, and economic intervention that was to continue throughout the following decades of the cold war and even beyond.

But if the Truman Doctrine established an American sphere of influence in the lower Balkans and the eastern Mediterranean, it did nothing to address the grave dollar shortage that had dried up international trade and paralyzed European economies. This in turn had fortified leftist and communist-led parties in Western Europe—particularly in France. Thus the problem was not only economic but also political. To address what he deemed a desperate situation, Walter Lippmann sounded the alarm bell in his influential newspaper column by calling for a massive infusion of American financial aid to restore the economies of a war-shattered Europe.

Such a historic commitment, which involved billions of dollars in American grants and loans, was designed to achieve what American officials had sought: not only European recovery, but also the economic reconstruction of Germany at its heart. Less than a month later Dean Acheson, deputy to Secretary of State George Marshall, publicly proposed the groundbreaking initiative that was immediately dubbed the Marshall Plan.

The key question—aside from securing such a huge appropriation from Congress—was whether the Russians would be invited to participate, and whether, despite their desperate economic need, they would be willing to do so. From their perspective the American offer, however tantalizing, posed a serious disadvantage. It would imperil not only the loss of a privileged trading area, but also their political dominance in an area from which they had been invaded and that they considered to be vital to their physical security.

This suspicion was not unfounded. As George Kennan later described the American plan, the Russians and the Eastern European governments under their control would “either exclude themselves by unwillingness to accept the proposed conditions, or agree to abandon the exclusive orientation of their economies.”<sup>26</sup> Charles Bohlen, a Soviet expert in the State Department and an adviser to Roosevelt at Yalta, later confirmed that the American plan was framed in such a way as to “make it quite impossible for the Soviet Union to accept.”<sup>27</sup>

The Russians, despite their misgivings, turned up in Paris in June 1947 for the initial discussions of the Marshall Plan, largely in hopes that Washington could be persuaded to provide the reconstruction funds with no strings attached. The American delegates, who knew that Congress would never provide the money under such terms, predictably refused. Upon reaching this impasse, the Soviet envoys strode out of the conference and took with them the reluctant Eastern European delegates. Given the choice between their hope for American reconstruction dollars and their economic, political, and military hold over their satellites, they unsurprisingly preferred the latter. They then proceeded to organize their own trading bloc in the Eastern states under their control.



## TWO WORLDS FROM ONE

With the Russians excluded the Truman administration was able to sell the aid program to Congress as a barrier against the spread of communism. Each side would now have “its” Europe. Thus it would remain for the next four decades. Rather than helping to unite Europe, the Marshall Plan served to divide it further. The satellization of Europe between the flanking giants meant the end of any hope for a Europe that would be a neutralist “third force.” It meant that the Western European nations, as Richard Barnet has observed, “now had the power to frustrate America’s traditional vision of a liberal economic order, for their very survival depended on the creation of a regional economic bloc.”<sup>28</sup> Thus did the Marshall Plan work in ways not fully intended by its planners. It created the motivation and the fuel for a Western European entity that led to the Common Market—and ultimately to a European Union spanning the continent.

Unable to detach Eastern Europe from Soviet control by economic inducements, the Truman administration pursued a course of military pressure. The rationale for the new policy was laid out by George Kennan in an essay commissioned by the influential journal *Foreign Affairs* in the summer of 1947. The State Department’s expert on the Soviet Union warned in militant language that the Russians, despite tactics designed to conceal their aggressive intentions, were driven by a “messianic ideology” that imperiled the West. This malign threat, he argued, could be countered only by “unanswerable force” on the part of the United States. If applied vigorously, it would, in Kennan’s words, lead to “either the break-up or the gradual mellowing of Soviet power.”<sup>29</sup>

Kennan was not speaking for himself alone; rather, his alarmist prescription reflected his high position within the American government and also the views of Pentagon officials, who sought a massive American rearmament program that included atomic weapons, known by the code name of NSC 68. While Kennan later publicly deplored what he called the “misunderstanding” of his views and became an outspoken critic of what he considered to be the militarization of American foreign policy, his “counterforce” argument nonetheless dramatized the breakdown of what remained of the wartime alliance.

Although Kennan’s analysis and the global rearmament policy that it called for expressed the new policy, it was not universally applauded. In a series of fourteen newspaper articles, later published as a book under the title *The Cold War*, Walter Lippmann vigorously challenged Kennan’s analysis. Describing the “containment doctrine” as a “strategic monstrosity,” he warned that it would confront the United States with a policy of unending intervention in support of a vast array of American-subsidized “satellites, clients, dependents and puppets.”<sup>30</sup> The real quarrel between America and Russia, he insisted, lay not in the remote fringes of the Soviet empire but in the heart of Europe. To assuage the Russians’ fears about their security, he

urged, the United States should propose a joint withdrawal of Soviet and American troops and a political settlement in Europe. Germany could then be reunited under strict guarantees of neutrality.

But the gap between the Truman administration and the critics of containment like Lippmann was too great to be bridged by compromise. The critics believed that the Marshall Plan could be used as the means to achieve a withdrawal of foreign armies and the unification of Europe. American officials, however, favored a policy of overwhelming strength. In their eyes, for such a policy to be effective required the economic and military restoration of Germany based on the fusion of the three Western zones of occupation. Their views prevailed. In late 1947 America, Britain, and France moved to create an independent West German state tucked firmly into a transatlantic alliance structure.

This predictably provoked a strong reaction from Moscow. Fearful that this move would block their hopes for economic reparations from the Ruhr and leave them reliant on only the meager resources of their largely agricultural occupation zone, they vigorously but unsuccessfully pressed for unified Germany. Though not normally sympathetic to Soviet concerns, Lippmann warned that an independent West German state would cement the division of Europe. "We must not set up a German government in the three Western zones and . . . make a separate peace with it," he wrote to John Foster Dulles, the chief Republican foreign policy adviser and future secretary of state.<sup>31</sup>

But the American authorities did not want to unify Germany if the price were neutrality. They wanted the largest and richest part of Germany linked to an American-directed Atlantic community. The Marshall Plan became the dividing line. From that, all else followed: the currency reform of June 1948 that fused the economies of the three Western zones, the creation of an independent West German state under American protection and influence, and the signing of the North Atlantic Treaty in 1949. In 1950, five years after the end of World War II, the United States moved to create a West German army and bring it into the newly-formed NATO. The lines of the cold war were drawn. Each side preferred a divided Germany and a divided Europe to a unified Germany and a unified, possibly nonaligned, Europe.

The restoration of Western Europe under American economic assistance and military protection created a new reality: not a European community, but rather an Atlantic community of states linked by strong economic, military, and political ties. This served as a means to address the German Problem by finding a place for the largest, most populous, and most productive part of Germany in a divided continent. And it became the instrument for refocusing a still-divided Europe in an Atlantic framework. There it remained until the startling and unexpected collapse of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s.

The "founding fathers" in the 1940s and 1950s created an institution of far greater endurance than even they anticipated. But the Atlantic community now faces perhaps its greatest challenge as a once-divided continent is

being transformed into a European community with interests, ambitions, and concerns that focus not across the Atlantic, but away from it.

## NOTES

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## 2 Wilsonianism, Pre-Wilsonian American Liberalism, and the Atlantic Community

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This essay was supposed to be about the role Wilsonianism played in the development of the Atlantic community during the cold war. Apparently, this topic was prompted by conference organizers who harbored the widespread assumption, which exists in the United States and elsewhere, that US foreign policy in the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries has been to a significant degree driven by one variant or another of Wilsonian ideology. Specifically, it is taken for granted that the impulse to intervene for the purpose of spreading democracy nationally and federalism regionally somehow lies at the core not only of Wilsonianism, but of the American style of foreign policy more generally. In the case of Europe, this predisposition was presumably translated into a US desire to see created a United States of Europe as an expression of the Wilsonian impulse. If the United States is an exceptionalist nation, and if Wilsonianism is the expression par excellence of exceptionalism, then the creation of a united Europe owed much to the practical application of this exceptionalist creed.

However, in this essay I will argue that Wilsonianism had little to do with the American desire to promote European unity—that, in fact, the idea of European union has deeper roots in nineteenth-century liberal thought. All Wilsonians were liberals, but not all liberals were Wilsonians. Though it seems likely that Wilson would have been favorably disposed to ideas of European integration and stronger transatlantic connections, he had no interest in promoting them during his tenure as a policy maker. To talk about Wilsonianism in the European cold war context or in a more contemporary key simply promotes confusion about what US foreign policy is and has been about.

But first, before I get to the heart of my argument, I want to make clear that American policy toward Europe during the cold war was Wilsonian in at least one respect: It sought to prevent the domination of the continent by the Soviet Union. Following American entry into the Great War, Wilson identified Germany's attainment of its *Mitteleuropa* project, which would have given the *Kaiserreich* effective mastery not only of the continent, as the chief threat to American security. In spelling out this danger, he pointed to Germany's program of eastward expansion through Europe and Central

Asia, the object of which was “to throw a broad belt of German power and political control across the very center of Europe and beyond the Mediterranean into the heart of Asia.” Following the consolidation of this “empire of force,” the Germans would “erect an empire of gain and commercial supremacy.” The danger was not direct or immediate, but Wilson believed that successful achievement of *Mitteleuropa* would have enabled Germany to dominate the world system and to shape the global political environment. Once German power was “inserted into the heart of the world,” he suggested, “her power can disturb the world as long as she keeps it.” By controlling the world’s central trade routes, Germany would “dominate the world itself.”<sup>1</sup>

The threat to American security as defined by Wilson corresponded very closely with the Soviet danger as it was understood within cold war Washington. Other elements of the Wilsonian definition of threat were also present: the fear that the European balance of power was no longer an effectively functioning institution; apprehensiveness about another catastrophic war in which the costs far outran any conceivable benefits; the belief that the war might start in an obscure place and burn quickly out of control; the likelihood that the war would necessarily be global; and the biggest danger of all—the possibility that defeat might be a historic reversal for liberal democracy as a political creed, leading to the transformation of the global environment into a system in which the survival of democracy might prove very difficult. These fears were all systematically articulated by Wilson, and it can easily be shown that they also motivated America’s cold warriors. Moreover, many features of cold war strategy, particularly such core beliefs as the domino theory and the Munich analogy, can be explained by connecting them to the Wilsonian view of the world. Thus, using Wilsonianism as a key can unlock some cold war puzzles that otherwise might still have us scratching our heads in confusion.<sup>2</sup>

With that said, many of the positive institutional elements of American policy toward Europe after 1945 owed little or nothing to Wilsonian thinking. NATO, for example, was first and foremost an alliance intended to stabilize a European balance of power. Apart from its European provenance, its origins in American thought can be more easily traced, as John Milton Cooper Jr. has suggested, to the thinking of Theodore Roosevelt than to Woodrow Wilson.<sup>3</sup> To make NATO work, the United States had to solve some other problems as well, particularly the Franco-German dispute. This was done by making the United States’ presence in Europe virtually permanent, thus protecting Western Europe from itself, and by promoting a functional integration of the continent by various means: first the ECSC and Payments Union, then the failed European Defence Community, the entry of West German troops into NATO, and finally by establishing the European Economic Community via the Treaty of Rome and after. This constellation of measures, which in combination formed an approach that Wolfram Hanrieder has called “double containment,” was an innovation of which Wilson

had not the slightest inkling. For that matter, the policy of “containment” also lay beyond Wilson’s intellectual and historical horizon.

If there is any single element of Wilsonianism that stands as the centerpiece of his thinking, it would certainly be the League of Nations. Although the kinds of threats that Wilson’s League had been intended to address still existed—principally, the threat of war among the Great Powers—the history of the 1930s, World War II, and the cold war showed that the Wilsonian solution of “collective security” (as it came to be called in the 1930s) could not work because it was no longer taken seriously by policy makers as a viable solution to the geopolitical problems of the day. The decline of Wilsonianism actually began very quickly with the failure of the League of Nations project in the United States and the subsequent unwillingness of American policy makers to seriously entertain membership or even loose affiliation with that body. Even Franklin D. Roosevelt, who was a disciple of Wilson in 1919 and 1920, never took seriously the possibility of American membership in the League. During his presidency, the most that he hoped to achieve was a degree of practical cooperation with the international organization. But membership and its “obligations” was outside the boundaries of realistic political discourse.

The coup de grace came in 1945 with the creation of the United Nations as a successor organization. The logical Wilsonian thing to have done, given the perceived consequences of America’s failure to join the League of Nations in 1920, would have been to push for an organization that was capable of generating the kind of spirit and force that had been so grievously lacking in the 1930s. Instead, the Americans helped to create a world body that was by design less ambitious and less effective than the League, whose failures were attributable to shortcomings much more fundamental than the failure of the United States to join the organization. Rather, it was the absence of cooperative commitment among the other major powers to the very idea of collective security that had come to be generally recognized as the League’s fundamental flaw. There was simply no way of generating this kind of consensus through rules that nations would ignore if their national interests were not directly imperiled. Accordingly, this lack of commitment was embedded in the very core of the UN charter. With the creation of the Security Council and the ironclad veto, the League of Nations’ ambitious goal of providing an institutional structure that could actually prevent a great power from embarking on a career of expansion was formally abandoned.<sup>4</sup>

Although there was some enthusiasm at the beginning for the United Nations among former Wilsonian stalwarts, much of this enthusiasm was based on a misunderstanding of the organization’s structure or a serious misconception of the degree to which the Great Powers would be willing and able to cooperate in the war’s aftermath. The United Nations was a fundamentally different kind of organization whose veto system within the Security Council acknowledged that there could be no institutional mechanism for preventing war among the Great Powers. It was on the basis of

that understanding that the United Nations was not created to be a collective security institution. We know that important policy makers, like Dean Acheson, were nearly contemptuous of the UN's potential for dealing with the most serious problems of the time as opposed to "the continued moral, military and economic power of the United States."<sup>5</sup> While NATO as an institution bore some resemblance to a collective security institution among its regional members, its very existence as an alliance was testimony to the failure of collective security on a larger global stage.

By 1945, Wilsonianism as a universal ideology was already well on the way to becoming defunct, and its practical influence would continue to diminish over time, leaving only a symbol of American idealism that had little bearing on practical political problems. As for the de-Wilsonized United Nations, at its most optimistic an expression of hope in the continuation of the wartime Grand Alliance, it soon came to be viewed by American policy makers as grossly inadequate for dealing with the most pressing problems of international security. With the exception of the UN-sanctioned war in Korea, which was made possible only by the anomalous absence of the Soviet representative from the Security Council, the UN played no role in resolving the most serious security problems of the cold war era. The number of times the United States exercised the veto (after 1970, the United States would become the most frequent exerciser), US arrears in its dues to the UN, and the withdrawal and subsequent rejoining of UNESCO became solid indicators in their own way of the low estate to which the international organization had fallen in the United States.

After 1945, then, the architecture of American policies was not particularly Wilsonian. Instead of being truly collective, global security during the cold war was financed, politically managed, and militarily implemented principally by the United States in a process that I have called the nationalization of internationalism. There were all kinds of differences between what Wilson had in mind for the continent after the Great War and the politico-military solution that slowly evolved after 1945. Wilson himself never talked about a continuing American presence in Europe; the French treaty was inconceivable outside the context of the League project and was accepted only because it was a trade-off for French acceptance of Wilson's League. In contrast, NATO was pretty much a European project to which the United States had signed on, and so too were the EDC and the European Economic Community. One can perhaps see in the "one-for-all and all-for-one" features of NATO a League of Nations in microcosm, but its status as a regional organization and later as a military alliance made it a fundamentally different kind of body. Apart from the definition of threat, then, the solution to the Wilsonian problem in Europe was not particularly Wilsonian, nor was it even of American provenance or inspiration.

But, one may ask, is there not more to Wilsonianism than collective security? An analysis of some of the other principal elements of foreign policy commonly identified with Wilsonianism may have more complex



histories—particularly national self-determination and the promotion of democracy—but the net result is the same. Wilson was not a particularly avid promoter of democracy through the use of American power (Haiti and the Dominican Republic are hardly convincing examples of a universal democratizing thrust); nor was he a devoted defender or promoter of the principle of national self-determination, if his behavior at the Paris Peace Conferences in 1919 is any indication. He violated the principle as often as he defended it; and even where it was put into effect it was done so badly as to have tragic consequences in the coming decades.

The historical wasting away of Wilsonianism was also evident in the disappearance of enthusiasm for Wilsonianism as a creed. Ideologies are sometimes defined as secular religions; and if we look at early Wilsonianism, it certainly did seem like a faith for its extraordinary ability to stir up an almost religious enthusiasm among its believers. Wilson himself has often been referred to as a messianic figure, a prophet scorned, and so on. But if we look at internationalism after 1945, that enthusiasm had almost completely disappeared. Whatever one thinks of it, Wilsonianism was able to generate an almost religious fervor among its believers during the Great War and during World War II, a sense of exaltation that was prompted by Wilson's imaginative ability to see the redemptive possibilities in what otherwise would have been an unspeakably bleak world situation. One detects neither that kind of enthusiasm nor faith during the cold war.

Various other elements of Wilson's thought-world, such as free-market economic internationalism, anti-imperialism, and cultural internationalism via Anglo-Saxonism, have either been exaggerated or they have been so successful that there is no longer much need for them; they are fixed features of the international landscape for the foreseeable future, at least. In any event, these are not Wilsonian ideas, strictly speaking. I do not have the space here to argue these points in detail, but I will simply note the following: (1) these ideas are less Wilsonian than they are nineteenth-century liberal beliefs of which Wilson was not the architect and which he did little to promote; (2) even these ideas failed to carry political resonance because they became part of the political landscape after 1950; and (3) to the extent that they were adopted, they took forms that would have been alien to Wilson (for example, the multilateral economic institutions of Bretton Woods). In summary, Wilsonianism went out of existence either because it failed, as with collective security; because it succeeded and hence was no longer necessary, as with anti-imperialism, democratization, and economic internationalism; or because the kinds of problems that gave rise to Wilsonianism in the first place, especially the problem of war among the Great Powers, no longer existed and no longer required Wilsonian solutions—that is, it became irrelevant. Over the course of the twentieth century, the troubles that gave rise to Wilsonianism have disappeared to the extent that we no longer inhabit a recognizably Wilsonian world.<sup>6</sup>



Over time there has been a marked debasement of Wilsonianism to the point that it has become a mere caricature of itself; if taken literally, it is something that no sensible person could ever choose to believe in. The tendency to attribute American policy to a Wilsonian impulse reached its apex in 2003 when the invasion of Iraq was interpreted by many as the consequence of a conversion to Wilsonianism on the part of President George W. Bush. Even if one ignores Wilson's principled belief that democracy could not be imposed from the outside, the failure of the Bush administration to acknowledge any debt to Wilson speaks volumes about its ideology. Moreover, the resort to a "coalition of the willing" in Iraq was fundamentally anti-Wilsonian for the obvious reason that Wilson envisaged collective security as a process that operated on a universal, global scale. Despite all this, the belief in the potency of Wilsonianism persists, if not among policy makers, then among historians, pundits, and the general public.<sup>7</sup>

If Wilsonianism was not the source of American thinking about a united Europe and an Atlantic community, what are its origins in American intellectual and cultural history? These origins can be found, I would suggest, in American thinking about events in Europe in the late nineteenth century and in their connection to global developments. American thinking about Europe in the nineteenth century was quite interesting and complicated. On the one hand, cosmopolitan Americans acknowledged the nation's inferiority to Europe in all sorts of ways: European literature was superior; so too was European art, theater, and music; French food was better; so was French fashion; and the French also managed to teach Americans about the potential for refined city life. German higher education was the best in the world. Governments were better administered by their state bureaucracies, especially in Germany; administration was more honest and government appointees more competent. The Europeans also excelled in science. Even European political ideas were more exciting. Thus, even though the United States was a liberal society, Americans were forced to take their ideological cues from liberal thinkers in Great Britain like John Stuart Mill, Walter Bagehot, William Cobden, John Bright, and, of course, William Gladstone. Laissez-faire economics was learned largely from British teachers; although ironically, to a significant degree the Europeans learned economic protectionism from Americans.

Presumably, Americans could take consolation in their superior technology. The term "Americanization," which first appears in the 1860s of French coinage, referred to America's capacity to create a machine-based society that would swamp humane culture. But even here the United States was hardly unique. In 1890, the journalist Murat Halstead issued a warning about "national conceits." "A conceit that should be removed from the American mind," he wrote, "is that these United States constitute the only country where there has been during the latest generation marked advancement. The truth is that all countries have improved in the era of railways and telegraphs, of steam and steel." As a number of pieces pointed out, in

many ways great and small the United States was becoming “more and more like other countries,” caught up in a transnational process of development that was, as one essayist put it, “running, in parallel lines and with nearly equal rapidity, in many countries and in many races.”

But there was one area in which Americans believed themselves to be clearly superior to the Europeans: their republican political system, their representative democracy, was the way of the future. In 1865, *The Nation* put the issue most starkly. The American idea was “strikingly opposed to the European one . . .,” it said. Because European civilization had been founded on force and American civilization on freedom, it followed that “practically, in fact, our institutions are an exact inversion of theirs.”<sup>8</sup> Whereas Europeans associated “Americanization” with mechanization and the debasement of elite values and standards,<sup>9</sup> Americans equated it with the global spread of republican ideology and democratic institutions. It was this meaning that the historian and diplomat John Lothrop Motley had in mind in 1868 when he declared that “the hope of the world lies in the Americanization of the world.”<sup>10</sup> Pre-Civil War republicanism, crippled by the fratricidal politics of slavery, could easily be disregarded, but the Civil War had finally put the nation on the map ideologically by creating a great nation committed to an ideal.<sup>11</sup>

President Abraham Lincoln’s wartime description of the national republic as “the last, best hope of earth” had left open the possibility of failure, but the Union’s triumph appeared to mark a decisive reversal of the tide of reaction that had flooded Europe following the revolutions of 1848. “A democracy that could fight for an abstraction,” warned James Russell Lowell, “was the nightmare of the Old World taking upon itself flesh and blood, turning out to be substance and not dream.”<sup>12</sup> The vindication of the republic and the principles of freedom and equality was a world-historical development that, according to Oliver Wendell Holmes, would have a shattering impact on Europe. “Out of the hive of nations,” he predicted, “no Saracens sweeping from their deserts to plant the Crescent over the symbol of Christendom, were more terrible to the principalities and powers that stood in their way, than the Great Republic, by the bare fact of its existence, will become to every government which does not hold its authority from the people.”<sup>13</sup> An interesting analogy, this, comparing the spread of republicanism to the sweeping triumphs of Islam.

Europe was clearly the center of modern civilization, its historical heartland; but it was equally clear that the continent had serious problems. American liberals were most disturbed by the failure of republican political systems to take root on the continent. In the wake of the revolutions of 1848, liberals felt embattled by the emergence of new kinds of conservative and authoritarian regimes that were capable of using enfranchised mass publics for their own purposes. The continued hold of the Tories and social traditionalism in England; the emergence of a plebiscitary authoritarian regime in France and the instability of its republican successor; the

astounding success of a conservative regime in Germany that managed to appropriate elements of both liberalism and social democracy; and the stubborn hold of the czarist autocracy in Russia demonstrated that conservatism and reaction were making a comeback. A republican future was not yet in sight among the other leading nations of the world.

No country was free of fundamental shortcomings. Though Great Britain was culturally similar, under the control of Tories it had a foreign policy of imperialist bullying that rubbed Americans the wrong way. And it was not long before the liberal Britain that Americans imagined gave way to the Labor Party and Fabian socialism. The image of Germany as a technologically and culturally advanced nation harnessed to an atavistic political system soon eclipsed the view, popular after the Franco-Prussian War, that a German federation would provide a democratic core around which all of Europe could modernize politically. As for France, the good news after 1871 was that it was now a republic—the only other major republic in the world at the time—but the bad news was that it was a French republic. French politics, Americans believed, was rooted in a volatile and immature political culture in which delusions of grandeur and a fondness for authoritarianism. Italy was revered as a birthplace of liberalism and as a secular state that was willing to stand up to the papacy in Rome, but it was also criticized for its excessive statism, political corruption, the anarchic character of the Italian people, and an excessively ambitious foreign policy. Spain? When the republic was announced in 1873, Americans greeted it with skepticism, only to have that confirmed with restoration of the monarchy soon after. Its culture was still stuck in the sixteenth century, and change would take place with barely perceptible slowness at best. Regarding Russia, after a brief period of hope inspired by early Alexandrine reforms, the perception was that democracy and development would not come to the country for a long, long time. The peasantry was too culturally backward, the aristocracy too backward looking, the government too autocratic by nature, the middle classes far too small, and the opposition too violent. The Russian Empire, most understood, was “little different from a slumbering volcano.”<sup>14</sup> General George McClellan, like many others, feared that change would come only through violence “and the horrible upheavals of socialism and communism.”<sup>15</sup>

If democracy had yet to take root domestically in Europe, the situation was even worse in foreign affairs because the politics of the continent were dominated by what William Seward had called “the crazy balance of power.”<sup>16</sup> From the mid-1870s, the consensus view was that a major war in Europe was inevitable given the huge buildup of armaments and the crises that increasingly disturbed the political calm. Americans were sensitive to Anglo-French and Franco-German rivalries; to Austro-Russian tensions; and to cultural and ethnic differences between East and West, North and South. The emergence of huge standing armies coupled with fast-moving technological innovations in weapons, national insecurities, rigid alliance

systems, and a potentially explosive situation in the Balkans led Americans to predict a huge new European war as early as the mid-1870s. This martial turn of events came as a surprise, for the period of relative calm in European foreign relations following the Napoleonic wars had nourished the expectation that the trend toward peace would continue.<sup>17</sup> During those years, recalled Arthur G. Sedgwick, a New York lawyer who wrote frequently on international law, war was regarded as “a temporary misfortune or disease, to be ‘localized’ as far as possible.”<sup>18</sup> The presumption at the time was that wars with a diminishing number of barbarous peoples would continue as part of the civilizing process while relations among developed nations would grow evermore peaceful. Alas, Sedgwick noted ruefully, “for some reason, which philosophers have not yet fathomed, the world does not move on in a path of uninterrupted progress toward the millennium. What is won to-day is lost to-morrow.”<sup>19</sup>

In the minds of Americans, European politics were always connected to developments in other parts of the world. Thus the various Balkan crises of the 1870s and 1880s and their connection to the European balance of power were understood to be the likely cause of a great war. Having received a handsome new German atlas published in 1887, a reviewer for *The Nation*, America’s leading liberal journal, described the map of the Balkans “as a war-map of the future.”<sup>20</sup> (Americans were divided on which was more desirable: preventing Russia from obtaining Constantinople or doing away with the Ottoman Empire once and for all.) But the so-called Eastern Question was also connected to the competition between England and Russia in central Asia and Afghanistan that came to be known as “the Great Game,” in which Russian expansion in the direction of India was interpreted as an attempt to divert British attention from the competition over the future of the Ottoman Empire. The diplomacy of imperialism in Asia and Africa was also viewed as an extension of European politics. It was both a source of prestige and a safety valve for the release of pressures built up on the continent. And it was through the diplomacy of imperialism, particularly in China and Japan, that the United States was connected to the politics of Europe through a long chain of politics that stretched from Europe to Asia. This involvement took place amid a great deal of ambivalence about colonialism, about which Americans could be quite critical, but the connections were there nevertheless.

Well, so what? How important were these American perspectives on international relations? First, they created a tendency to look at European issues in a global framework. European problems and the American presence in East Asia were not thought of solely in regional terms. In contrast to the view of the world held in the early days of the Republic, when Alexander Hamilton (in *The Federalist*, no. 11) had conceived of the globe as separated into four mutually exclusive political spheres, the conceptual boundaries between regions were becoming much more porous. Second, in addition to viewing global politics simply as a matter of power, Americans

also approached them from the standpoint of civilization. So the problem with civilized Europe, the heartland of civilization, was that it was not civilized enough. On a global scale, the problem of civilization was whether the international environment would maintain the degree of openness—political, economic, ideological, and cultural—necessary to the survival of democratic systems and to the democratic transformation of Europe. During these years, it was the Europeans who were from Mars and the Americans from Venus.

In other words, Americans looked at international development from the standpoint of what today we would call “globalization.” The concept meant pretty much what it means today, but the term used back then was “civilization.” It was conceived to be universal—global—and it would ultimately include everyone, notwithstanding the belief in many circles that nonwhite races were biologically inferior to whites. While Americans compulsively compared themselves to Europe, they judged developments in general by a broader global standard.

This global perspective is also evident in how pre-Wilsonian American liberals of the late nineteenth century envisioned a solution to Europe’s problems. Looked at purely from a local perspective, Europe, if left to its own devices, might never abandon war. When viewed from a broader global framework, however, sunnier vistas opened up, for it was by that route that the European balance of power as an historically entrenched system could be bypassed. The solution, according to some prominent internationalists, was for the United States to play a central role in the development of a global civilization. With little likelihood of Europe being changed directly, it was in globality that the favorable prospects for civilization resided.<sup>21</sup>

Few Americans would have disagreed with Herbert Spencer’s prediction that “the Americans may reasonably look forward to a time when they will have produced a civilization grander than any the world has known.” After the Civil War, recalled the *Atlantic Monthly*, Americans sensed “an entirely fresh force and feeling to our foreign relations.” They smelled international greatness in the nation’s future. “Nothing,” proclaimed *Nation*, “can ever now prevent us from playing a great part in the future of modern society, in influencing both its manners and ideas; and the larger the part we play, the more important will our diplomacy become.” Speaking primarily about the impact that the US was likely to have upon the development of international law, one editorial predicted that by 1900 “no other government, or combination of governments, will be able to set up or impose any duty or doctrine which we have not sanctioned.”<sup>22</sup>

Twenty-five years later, the world looked rather different. A telling example of the kind of pessimism that had seeped into certain segments of liberal thought by the closing decade of the century was the gloomy view of the future contained in the sequel to Tennyson’s famous poem *Locksley Hall*. The first version, published in 1842, looked past human conflict to a future in which “the war-drum throb’d no longer, and the battle-flags

were furl'd / In the Parliament of man, the Federation of the world." However, in *Locksley Hall: Sixty Years After*, the sentiment had darkened quite a bit, as the poet now asked "who can fancy warless men?" The elimination of war now seemed a distant fantasy:

Warless? war will die out late then. Will it ever? late or soon? Can it, till  
this outworn earth be dead as yon dead world the moon?

Yale literary scholar T.R. Lounsbury used the new Tennyson to question whether universal peace could ever be achieved in Europe. "Is, in truth, such a hope any longer cherished not as a remote probability but even as a remote possibility?" he asked rhetorically. Human beings seemed to be "mere helpless atoms floating on a stream of tendency the current of which we cannot control, and borne onward to a catastrophe we cannot foresee."<sup>23</sup>

The inescapable conclusion to be drawn from the trajectory of events was that Europe would remain Europe, with little prospect of being changed by the United States. The traditional universalist rationale for isolation was that it would serve as a utopian example to the rest of the world. But the arms race then in progress showed only contempt for the American model that had been so widely touted at the end of the Civil War. Drawing a preparedness moral from the lesson, one writer noted that "all of the general increase of armament throughout the civilized world is in the face of the example set by this country of military and naval weakness and forbearance, and in spite of our professed devotion to the principles of arbitration." European militarism was here to stay for the foreseeable future and might even drag the United States into the Old World's quarrels. Isolationism in peace and neutral rights in war seemed to call for preparedness at a minimum and interventionism at the outside. How could an optimistic bottom line be calculated from all this? How could American greatness find expression in the context of a civilization apparently bent on self-destruction?<sup>24</sup>

To be sure, the balance of power was salutary for the United States in a number of respects. For one thing, Europe's preoccupation with continental politics meant that the Anglo-American world order was likely to remain unchallenged as the European powers concentrated on affairs closer to home. Thus, despite the absence of a major military establishment, Europe was in no position to threaten the American position or the Monroe Doctrine in the Western Hemisphere. The European balance was also beneficial in that European nations were forced to plow large sums into their militaries at the expense of economic development, giving the United States an investment advantage of the kind that Japan would enjoy in the second half of the twentieth century. In places like China, the US was able to maintain access to markets and status as a China treaty power with relatively little in the way of military investment and with little involvement in the region's diplomacy of imperialism.



On the other hand, the likelihood of war in Europe meant that the United States was likely to become involved because the implications of its traditional policy of neutrality pointed increasingly in that direction. By the 1880s, neutrality was perceived less as a way of staying out of a European war than as surefire prescription for becoming entangled in one, for it seemed a foregone conclusion that the greater reliance of belligerents on the industrial manufactures and raw materials of neutral powers was likely to bring neutrals into their crosshairs. "This is an age in which neutrals have fallen on evil times," said *The Century's* editorialist in 1889. The implications for the future were not very bright, for it was widely assumed that "in any future European war the United States will probably occupy its natural position as a neutral." One writer predicted that the next European war would find the United States "something more than an interested spectator" that was "sure to find itself a mark for encroachments and aggressions." It was even conceivable, as argued by US Minister in Berlin during the 1880s John Kasson (America did not begin to appoint ambassadors until 1893), that given the expanding European definitions of contraband, "War itself would become more fatal to neutral states than to belligerent interests."<sup>25</sup>

The handwriting was already on the wall during the Franco-Prussian War, at which time E. L. Godkin, the influential editor of *The Nation*, was

struck by the increasing difficulty of the position of neutrals in all wars. The close relations, as far as time and space are concerned, into which steam and the telegraph and commerce have now brought all civilized powers, make every armed struggle an object of intense interest to lookers-on, as well as to those actually engaged in it, and this interest, in turn, makes the belligerents increasingly sensitive and exacting.

If war came, the United States, being the most powerful neutral, would not only follow its own interests but was likely to become the custodian of neutral rights in general. This would be both dangerous and debasing, because threatening to make war for the right to turn a profit from war would puncture the widespread impression that neutrality somehow corresponded with righteousness. Theodore Dwight Woolsey, a pioneering scholar of international law and President of Yale until 1871, minced no words on this matter: "War now, to no small an extent, is carried on by neutrals and for neutrals," he wrote. "They are the capitalists in the workshop of death."<sup>26</sup>

Moreover, completely impartial neutrality would be hard to pull off in such a war. It was a given that the nation would come under pressure from belligerents eager to mold neutral commerce to their strategic requirements. It did not take a soothsayer to predict great tension in relations with Great Britain. But what about other nations and, especially, the land powers? *The*

*Nation* pointed out the possibility, embedded in the treaty of Washington, of conflicting neutral obligations in, say, a war between Russia and Britain. If the practical benefits were too one-sided, that would do violence to the impartiality that inhered in the very idea of neutrality. And if the economic stakes were great enough in such a situation, the pressure to enter the war on one side or the other would be enormous. Thus *The Century* wondered whether this concern for defending neutral rights “may not be made the means for transferring the once great neutral republic to the list of quasi-belligerents.” In other words, the logic of neutrality might push irresistibly in the direction of non-neutrality. Preparedness might put teeth in neutrality, but as in the War of 1812, how to avoid putting the nation in the company of the great militarist powers at the same time was far from clear.<sup>27</sup>

It was unthinkable to imagine a future in which the United States simply joined the ranks of the traditional Great Powers. Even proponents of armament realized that “to the great majority of the American people the experience of Europe is of no value as a guide.” America was not like Europe; its international position was “entirely anomalous.” In 1871, with the Civil War presumably having established once and for all the viability of the idea of republican confederation, Edward Everett Hale anticipated the imminent creation of a United States of Europe inspired by the American example, a hope that soon proved to be empty. A decade later, there seemed little prospect that Europe’s political dynamics could be transformed by a bilateral relationship between republican exemplar and willing continental student. A United States of Europe was recognized to be impossible in the nineteenth century not only because of the balance of power, but also because of the huge cultural differences between the various nations that composed it.

When viewed within a broader global framework, however, sunnier vistas opened up. The most notable attempt to look into America’s future by drawing connections with global historical development was made by John Fiske, a Harvard historian and frequent contributor of historical pieces to the higher-toned magazines and periodicals. Fiske’s extraordinarily popular 1884 essay “Manifest Destiny,” which was repeated hundreds of times in public lectures, has often been interpreted as a clarion call to empire. But empire was less on Fiske’s mind than the desire to explain, from a Spenseian evolutionary framework, how a pacific America and a warlike Europe might come together in a peaceful global future.<sup>28</sup> Like nearly everyone else, Fiske was upset by the course of developments on the continent. The challenge was to explain how military rivalry would be superseded by peaceful economic competition.

The challenge of modern times was to assure the transfer of power from “the hands of the war-loving portion of the human race into the hands of the peace-loving portion—into the hands of the dollar-hunters.” Fiske imagined two historical processes running in parallel: the Anglo-Saxon/global and the European/local. Clearly, Americans had a huge role



to play in creating the Anglo-Saxon global future. "To have established such a system over one great continent is to have made a very good beginning toward establishing it over the world," said Fiske. It was because of its global success that the US would have enormous consequences in the end. The "pacific pressure exerted upon Europe by America" was bound to have so great an impact that "in due time," the continent would "find it worth while to adopt the lesson of federalism in order to do away with . . . useless warfare." If Europe hoped to "keep pace with America in the advance toward universal law and order," some sort of federal system would be necessary. "The economic competition will become so keen," he predicted, "that European armies will have to be disbanded, the swords will have to be turned into ploughshares, and thus the victory of the industrial over the military type of civilization will at last become complete." Fiske concluded on a triumphant note: "Thus we may foresee in general how, by the gradual concentration of physical power into the hands of the most pacific communities, we may finally succeed in rendering warfare illegal all over the globe." If the future of the world could be derailed by developments within Europe, Americans believed that it could be decided for the better outside of Europe on a global scale. Viewed in this light, globalization was not a mere outcome, but a potent causal process in its own right.

Despite its many obvious shortcomings, Fiske's prophetic essay managed to chart a course to the future that, in general direction if not in precise routing, was strikingly prescient. For one thing, it was already apparent in his essay that Europe, the heartland of civilization, was beset by problems that it could not resolve by itself. Fiske spoke for many other Americans who followed international politics by throwing up his hands in despair at Europe's inability to cope with its own troubles, and he did so long before the onset of the calamities of the twentieth century confirmed to all onlookers the continent's penchant for self-destruction. Europe, it was already understood, could only be forced to change from the outside. His predictions about the decisive impact of the United States on Europe's politics also proved to be correct, although he failed to anticipate that it would take an imperial form that would go a long way toward militarizing American society. And despite the unforeseen political and military intervention of the United States, the conviction that liberal commercial and cultural processes would play a huge and ultimately decisive role in shaping an ultimately benign world would continue to exercise a powerful grip on the imaginations of American policy makers throughout the twentieth century and after. Although globalization had failed to save Europe from two wars, its potential as an impetus to changing the political atmosphere was demonstrated after 1945 when the success of the liberal world economy did force the Soviet Union to abandon its principled opposition to capitalist democracy. Most significant in the long run was the global perspective from which Fiske proceeded, whereby the problem would be solved by

expanding it. In so doing, he was helping to lay the basis for what would become the next century's realism.

When the Great War broke out in August 1914, Wilson was at first faced with the problem of neutrality, the implications of which he resisted for nearly three years in the false hope that the United States could mediate a peace between the belligerents. As nineteenth-century thinkers had anticipated, a policy based on neutral rights would pull the United States into a European war. Once neutrality policy failed, Wilson shifted to a geopolitical justification for America's participation in which the political instability on the continent and Germany's grasp for world power became the primary problems. Inasmuch as the war demonstrated that conflicts in Europe were prone to escalate into global conflagrations, Wilson's solution to Europe's (and America's) problems, however, was not restricted to Europe, but it was a universal solution in which Europe's difficulties would be resolved by the new League of Nations.

This kind of thinking reflected an apprehension that the kind of open world order that had existed under the *Pax Britannica* would, if overturned, produce a global political environment that would be far more threatening and inhospitable to liberal nations like the United States. Nineteenth-century liberals were keenly aware of the combined weight of American and British influence across the globe. For example, George R. Parkin, a Canadian evangelist of imperial federation, tried to explain the global significance of Anglo-Saxon civilization to Americans by arguing that "any hinderance to the safe and free development of that civilization in either of its two great currents would be to the world's loss." This global context makes the appeal of Anglo-Saxonism more readily understandable. Since neither the US nor Great Britain could hope to function effectively as a lone globalizer, it followed that a disaster to Great Britain could be viewed by an American "as a calamity to his own country and to the world." And if, by some chance, the United States went to war against Great Britain, even an American victory in a such a war would be disastrous because of the war's negative impact on "the interests of the civilized world at large." Some, like the writer-reformer Thomas Wentworth Higginson, appeared to desire an alliance as the core of a greater federation, a "league of all honest and pacific nations against the turbulence of the ambitious and unruly." But it was less the survival of England as the makeweight in the European balance of power than England's role as an agent of globalization, Anglo-Saxon style, that mattered in the long run.<sup>29</sup>

The global tenor of Wilson's outlook is best exemplified by some remarks made in December 1918, just prior to the opening of the Paris Peace Conference. Speaking to a British audience, he tried to explain the United States' position regarding Europe: "I want to say very frankly to you that she is not now interested in European politics. But she is interested in the partnership of right between America and Europe . . . She is not interested merely in the peace of Europe, but in the peace of the world." Now, this was a quite curious statement coming from a president who had just led his country into the

greatest intervention in its history because of problems that originated in European politics. “She is not now interested in European politics.” What could Wilson possibly have meant by saying something so preposterous? Wilson’s thinking was by no means idiosyncratic. Rather, his ideas can best be understood by consulting a deeper tradition of liberal American discourse about world affairs. The words spoken by Wilson at the Free Trade Hall in Manchester were an expression of a global view of international relations that Wilson inherited from nineteenth-century liberalism.

This pre-Wilsonian body of thought that made a statement like this possible was just as influential in shaping America’s policy toward Europe during the cold war and after as Wilson’s thoughts about war and collective security. John Foster Dulles and President Eisenhower, in particular, viewed European problems as being to a large extent independent of the cold war; Europe was, in Dulles’s view, a “firetrap” that would require considerable fireproofing. It was prone to problems that would have required serious attention even if the cold war had not occurred. But unification would not have been possible without the cold war, which in turn provided the indispensable American politico-military presence in the background.

In any event, there was nothing ideologically programmatic about the way policy toward Europe developed after 1945. Rather, policy took the form of a sequence of by now well-known ad hoc steps, the background of which can be found in nineteenth-century American attitudes toward Europe. But as John Fiske had intuited, it was the Europeans themselves who would have to lead the way. The Marshall Plan did force the Europeans to formulate a general plan and thus contributed in a practical way to accustoming Europeans to working together economically, but most of the substantive proposals came from the Europeans. This was true of the European Coal and Steel Community, the ill-fated European Defence Community, and of Euratom and the Common Market. NATO of course provided unity; but however benevolent, it remained a hegemonic instrument. It was commonly recognized in the 1950s that the effect on NATO would be enormous. NATO seemed undesirable as a permanent solution; it was only an interim solution to a problem that would be resolved once European unity became a reality. It is indicative of the degree to which American policy makers were groping in the dark that they initially believed Euratom would be a more powerful instrument for creating European unity than the European Economic Community. If anything, the success of the common European project contributed to the further devaluation of Wilsonianism. The rise of the EU in the 1990s contributed to the emergence of a “normal internationalism” in which the kinds of problems that had so concerned American liberals appeared to have been overcome.

At the same time that American liberalism provided support for European unity and closer transatlantic connections, the global predisposition of this body of ideas was also the source of numerous tensions and disagreements. For example, some of the principal crises of the early cold war

era were managed with a view to maintaining American credibility, which could be both puzzling and disconcerting to Europeans who believed that the United States was being distracted by adventures outside of the continent. When applied to a place like Berlin, the concern for credibility could cause great uneasiness among Europeans; when applied in Asia to places like Korea, Vietnam, and the Taiwan Straits, the preoccupation with credibility could cause statesmen to break into a cold sweat. The short explanation for this behavior was that American policy, notwithstanding the fact that Europe was a core area of the cold war, was as a rule framed in a global and not a Euro-American context. And it was this pre-Wilsonian globalism, which in the nineteenth century had been a minority point of view, that dominated American thinking after 1945.

To conclude and summarize: since the nineteenth century, American liberals have been concerned about the need for Europe to create a federal, democratic community. While Wilson himself did nothing to promote such a project, cold warriors drew on a deeper tradition of thought to justify American support for a united Europe, which would be the key to the pacification of Great Power politics. But at the same time, the United States has continued to view the Atlantic community in relation to a broader global community, European politics as part of a broader global political process, and European development as a vitally important part of an even more important process of global development. The postwar settlement in Europe was based on a combination of Wilsonian threat perception, innovative use of alliance diplomacy to create a new balance of power, European initiative, and liberal globalist ideas about creating a united Europe. But there was no independent Wilsonian dynamic as such.

There are limits to the usefulness of Wilsonianism as an explanatory device. The thinking of one man and his disciples can tell us only so much. Granted, Wilsonianism was a striking development in United States foreign policy; but as an ideology, Wilsonianism has had a short half-life, and the rate of its decay has been very rapid. All Wilsonians were liberals, but the great majority of liberals over time have not been Wilsonians. Though Wilsonianism is often seen as the embodiment of American exceptionalism, in retrospect it was an exceptional development in American history. Wilsonianism played a significant role in how Americans defined modern dangers to their national security, but the deeper and more enduring sources of American foreign policy must be sought in the flourishing liberal ideology of the nineteenth century that took deep root in American culture. To focus on Wilsonianism risks ignoring the much richer cultural and ideological soil of late nineteenth century liberal thought from which Wilsonianism emerged, and in the absence of which Wilsonianism would have been impossible. If we want to understand the American view of Europe, not only during the cold war but for much of the twentieth century, we need to better understand its origins in pre-Wilsonian liberalism.

NOTES

1. Woodrow Wilson, "Flag Day Address" (Baltimore, MD, 14 June 1917), Papers of Woodrow Wilson (hereafter PWW), 42: 501; Woodrow Wilson, "Address to the American Federation of Labor" (Buffalo, NY, 12 November 1917), PWW, 45: 12, 14; Hamilton Foley, ed., *Wilson's Case for the League of Nations* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1923), 155–56.
2. I have tried to spell out the strategic significance of Wilsonianism in two books: *Modernity and Power: A History of the Domino Theory in the Twentieth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994) and *The Wilsonian Century: U.S. Foreign Policy Since 1900* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001).
3. John Milton Cooper Jr., "Whose League of Nations?" in *Artists of Power: Theodore Roosevelt, Woodrow Wilson, and Their Enduring Impact on U.S. Foreign Policy*, ed. William N. Tilchin and Charles E. Neu (Westport, CT: Praeger Security International, 2006), 176–77.
4. The League of Nations, it should be remembered, provided a veto, but not for member states who were parties to a dispute; these transgressors could still be punished by the collectivity.
5. Robert L. Beisner, *Dean Acheson: A Life in the Cold War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 52.
6. For a more detailed argument, see my essay, "Wilsonianism After the Cold War: Words, Words, Mere Words," in *Reconsidering Woodrow Wilson: Progressivism, Internationalism, War, and Peace*, ed. John Milton Cooper Jr. (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press; Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008), 299–325.
7. For a recent critical example, see Joan Hoff, *A Faustian Foreign Policy from Woodrow Wilson to George W. Bush: Dreams of Perfectibility* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008).
8. "The European and American Order of Thought," *Nation* 1, no. 15 (12 October 1865): 460.
9. Pascal Ory, "From Baudelaire to Duhamel," in *The Rise and Fall of Anti-Americanism: A Century of French Perception*, ed. Denis Lacorne, Jacques Rupnik, and Marie-France Toinet, trans. Gerald Turner (London: Macmillan, 1990), 46.
10. *Atlantic Monthly* 23, "Motley's Historic Progress and American Democracy" (April 1869): 519. Writing in *Harper's*, clergyman and author Samuel Osgood took it as a more conventional article of faith: "We have believed that the God of our fathers has called us to organize liberty in this nineteenth century, and that this is the American's mission, and ought to be his inspiration." Samuel Osgood, "New Aspects of the American Mind," *Harper's* 34 (May 1867): 797.
11. *Nation* 28, no. 716, "Histoire des Etats Unis d'Amerique" (20 March 1879): 205. "Our failure will not be fatal to us alone; it will involve the fate of the millions who are now seeking to plant themselves against the tremendous force of kingly and patrician prestige." *Atlantic Monthly* 14, "Our Recent Foreign Relations" (1864): 246
12. James Russell Lowell, "On a Certain Condescension in Foreigners," *Atlantic Monthly* 23 (January 1869): 93.
13. Oliver W. Holmes, "Our Progressive Independence," *Atlantic Monthly* 13 (1864): 512.
14. Review of *Russia Under the Tsars*, *Harper's* 71 (1885): 480.
15. George B. McClellan, "The War in the East," *North American Review* (125): 36.

16. William Seward, "Oration, The Destiny of America," in *The Life of William H. Seward With Selections From His Works*, ed. George E. Baker (New York: Redfield, 1855), 331.
17. *Nation* 46, no. 1181, "The Week" (16 February 1888): 127; *Nation* 51, no. 1321, "Thirty Years of European History" (23 October 1890): 327.
18. Arthur G. Sedgwick, "Unforeseen Results of the *Alabama* Dispute," *Atlantic Monthly* 41 (June 1878): 776.
19. Arthur G. Sedgwick, "Unforeseen Results of the *Alabama* Dispute," *Atlantic Monthly* 41 (June 1878): 776; *Living Age* 10, no. 123, "Commerce Versus Glory" (19 September 1846): 581–2.
20. *Nation* 44, no. 1148, "Notes" (30 June 1887): 554.
21. Edward Everett Hale, "The United States of Europe," *Old and New* III (March 1867): 260–67, reprinted in *The Great Design of Henry IV and The United States of Europe* (Boston, 1909), 77–91; F. V. Greene, "Our Defenceless Coasts," *Scribner's* 1 (1887): 51; *Nation*, "The French Arms Investigation" (4 April 1872): 212.
22. Henry Cabot Lodge, "Colonialism in the United States," *Atlantic Monthly* 51 (May 1883): 626; *Atlantic Monthly* 22, "American Diplomacy" (September 1868): 348; *Nation*, "The American Diplomatic Service" (27 February 1868): 166; E. L. Godkin, "Something More About Our 'Case,'" *Nation* (21 March 1872): 181.
23. T. R. Lounsbury, "The Two Locksley Halls," *Scribner's* 6 (1889): 252–53.
24. E. L. Godkin, "What the United States Does for Europe," *Nation* 32, no. 810 (6 January 1881): 4; Charles H. Stockton, "The Reconstruction of the U.S. Navy," *The Overland Monthly and Out West Magazine* 16, 94 (October 1990): 382.
25. *The Century* 37, "The Coast and the Navy" (April 1889): 952; *Nation*, "The Week" (2 April 1885): 271; *Nation*, "Why the War Has Not Been More Disastrous to Trade" (22 September 1870): 185; *Nation*, "The Week" (1 June 1882): 451; J. Russell Soley, "The Effect on American Commerce of an Anglo-Continental War," *Scribner's* 6 (1889): 550, 539, 545.
26. E. L. Godkin, "Neutrals and Contraband," *Nation* (15 September 1870): 165; "Belligerents and Neutrals," *Nation* (3 August, 1876): 70; Theodore Woolsey, "The Alabama Question," *New Englander and Yale Review* 28, no. 108 (July 1869): 619.
27. A. G. Sedgwick, "Our Position in Case of a War," *Nation* (25 April 1878): 271; *The Century* 37, "The Coast and the Navy" (April 1889): 952; Horace White, "The Uses of a Navy," *Nation* (18 April 1889): 319; *Appleton's* 13, "Miscellany," (January 30, 1875): 159.
28. John Fiske, "Manifest Destiny," *Harper's* (March 1885): 578–90. For a more philosophical/logical statement about the need for European unification, see Leigh Mann, "Intellectual Basis of Civilized Peace," *Overland Monthly and Out West Magazine* 10, 3 (March 1873): 219.
29. George R. Parkin, "The Reorganization of the British Empire," *Century* 37 (1888): 191–92; J. Russell Soley, "The Effect on American Commerce of an Anglo-Continental War," *Scribner's* 6 (1889): 545; G. T. Ferris, "A Possible War and Its Probable Results," *NAR* 148 (1889): 133; "Culture and Progress," *Scribner's* 10 (1875): 521. This Americocentric view of Anglo-Saxondom was expressed about the same time by the historian George Bancroft, who saw the US as the new center of the English-speaking world. See his annual address delivered in New York, 27 April 1886, Papers of the American Historical Association II (1887): 7–13.



### 3 The Atlantic Community as Christendom

#### Some Reflections on Christian Atlanticism in America, circa 1900–1950

*Emiliano Alessandri*

This essay aims to enrich the very limited scholarship on the pre-cold war history of Atlanticism by focusing on “Christian Atlanticism” in America, circa 1900–1950. This is an intellectual perspective that is often neglected, even by studies that acknowledge that the concept of an “Atlantic community” dates back to at least the late nineteenth century and cannot be reduced to an ideological by-product of the bipolar era following World War II.<sup>1</sup> Christian Atlanticism refers, in essence, to a specific religious interpretation of American internationalism whereby the common Christian identity of Europeans and Americans offered the strongest rationale for transatlantic cooperation and the premise upon which to develop any reflection on America’s role in the world during the twentieth century.<sup>2</sup>

In order to illustrate the main elements of this line of thinking, the discussion will concentrate in particular on the contributions to the Atlanticist tradition of US Admiral Alfred Mahan; liberal intellectuals Walter Lippmann and Herbert Croly; religious activist Francis Miller; Catholic historians Carlton Hayes and Ross Hoffman; the theologian and father of Christian Realism Reinhold Niebuhr; as well as on one of the key mediums used by Christian Atlanticists to express their views, the magazine *Christianity and Crisis*.<sup>3</sup> Although certainly not exhaustive of an intellectual perspective that was embraced in varying degrees by vast sections of the American elites of the past century, the list above well exemplifies the internal diversity of Christian Atlanticism without obfuscating its core tenets, which were widely shared and remained fairly consistent over time.

Though they came from different backgrounds and belonged to various religious denominations, Christian Atlanticists agreed that the basic feature of the history of the modern world had been the expansion of Christianity from Europe to the rest of the globe. They argued that an “Atlantic

community” had been born out of the transatlantic projection of Christian Europe that came with the colonization of the New World. Critical of America’s exceptionalist self-representation as a “detached” and “different” country, Christian Atlanticists contended that American independence had not undermined the unity of Western peoples, but rather had added a new member to the “community of the Christian nations.”<sup>4</sup>

This expanded notion of Christendom, which viewed America and Europe as heirs to the same religious tradition, was functional to a vision with only limited connections to history and religion and conveyed instead an eminently political message. The first target of Christian Atlanticists was isolationism. In fact, the Atlantic community’s powerful identification with Christendom was used by American Atlanticists at various turning points, including on the verge of both World War I and World War II, in order to establish a link between America and Europe that was not merely strategic, but “spiritual” too: “tranhistorical” if not transcendent and, in a sense, “divinely-sanctioned.”

The second target was, more broadly, America itself. By insisting on a Christian notion of the West, American Christian Atlanticists actually attempted to clarify the content and meaning of the “American experiment” at home and the purpose of the “American mission” abroad. They insisted in particular that US leaders, as representatives of a “Christian nation,” had to stem the spread of “individualism”—seen as a cancer devouring the increasingly secular and materialistic American society from within—and employ America’s growing influence in the world to prevent the “Christian order” from disintegrating under the thrust of nationalistic competition.

While they strongly believed that the “American way” would have a modernizing impact on other Western societies and the world at large, Christian Atlanticists drew a sharp line between modernization and revolution. They understood the American power as primarily a “katechon”: a restraining force that could prevent the West from drifting off its allegedly “natural course”—the one traced by the Western Christian tradition—and succumbing to external, “alien” influences such as those from the East that were generally conceptualized and depicted as the Other.

America’s rise to international leadership, a development that American Atlanticists cheered and considered almost inevitable, was characteristically associated by Christian Atlanticists with a project that was presented as fundamentally conservative in nature: the restoration of the Christian truth through the demolition of the “false myths” of nation, race, and class created by fascism, nazism, and communism (the three “pagan religions” of the twentieth century).

Christian Atlanticists’ reading of history and their representation of world dynamics, albeit offered as the only “truthful” ones, were of course highly subjective when not markedly ideological. Perhaps the most notable element of the discourse accompanying American Christian Atlanticism was precisely an interpretation of leadership that, despite recognizing the



transformational impact that the American power would have on Europe and the rest of the world, presented the establishment of the American hegemony after World War II as, in fact, the “restoration” of the “old order” that was now “under attack.”

## THE RELIGIOUS DIMENSION IN THE EARLIEST VISIONS OF AN ATLANTIC COMMUNITY

When identifying the West with Christendom, American Atlanticists did not advance any particularly new or provocative perspective. They actually adhered to a longstanding intellectual tradition dating back to at least the Middle Ages.<sup>5</sup> What was original about their representation was that they insisted on a notion of the West that included America alongside Europe and that looked at the “Christian identity” of the Western peoples as the basis for a unity that was not only spiritual but also economic and strategic. In other words, religious Atlanticism is interesting for the political implications that Christian Atlanticists drew from the widespread, if not conventional, belief that the message of Christ was at the core of the Western tradition.

Nineteenth-century Atlanticists used the notion of a Christian West to justify American imperialism and its civilizing mission, not unlike the European imperialists who had conquered and colonized foreign lands under the banner of Christianity. The reflections of Alfred Mahan, one of the earliest theorists of the “Atlantic system,” clearly illustrates this position.<sup>6</sup>

The American admiral, whose seminal studies on “sea power” brought him international fame, emphasized the connection between the West and Christianity and promoted an understanding of world politics, not only in terms of a struggle between nations, but also as a confrontation between different civilizations defined by their culture and religion.<sup>7</sup> Generally associated with the birth of American political realism and most often remembered as an enthusiastic proponent of power politics, Mahan was also a Christian apologist who argued that history is driven by “spiritual” as well as material forces.<sup>8</sup> To him, the Atlantic community was much more than a strategic system to which America belonged by virtue of its “sea power” and the convergence of interests that “insularity” had created between the “island nations” of the US and Great Britain.<sup>9</sup> The Atlantic community also identified with a distinctive civilization whose identity was Christian.

When speculating on the outlook of the twentieth century, Mahan foresaw an epochal confrontation that would oppose the Christian West to the civilizations of Asia.<sup>10</sup> If the West’s immediate stake in Asia was access to resources and markets, the ultimate challenge would be to impose a hegemony that was not only economic but also cultural and religious. As a eulogizer of war as a force of progress and a fervent American nationalist, Mahan believed that Western empires shared a common mission: to preserve and expand Christendom. Mahan remarked,

We stand at the opening of a period when the question is to be settled decisively . . . whether Western or Eastern civilization is to dominate throughout the earth . . . The great task now before the world of civilized Christianity . . . is to receive into its own bosom and raise to its own ideals those ancient and different civilizations by which it is surrounded and outnumbered, . . . at the head of which stand China, India and Japan.<sup>11</sup>

When the “imperialist urge” of the late nineteenth century faded, the identification of the Atlantic community with Christendom was reaffirmed by Atlanticists who concentrated on the connection between American “hegemony” (then an emerging concept) and the creation of a liberal international order. With the turn of the century, and especially during World War I, the Atlantic community came to be increasingly associated with the liberal tradition, that is, with the civilization born out of the great political revolutions of the modern age: the American and French Revolutions.

During the first decades of the twentieth century, the leading proponents of Atlanticism included some progressive intellectuals, such as the journalist Walter Lippmann and the editor of the *New Republic* Herbert Croly, who characteristically linked the US intervention in World War I to the establishment after the conflict of a US-led liberal world order with the Atlantic community at its core.<sup>12</sup> Of lay orientations and inclined to approach world politics from the standpoint of the then-emerging social sciences, both Lippmann and Croly, like the imperialists of the late nineteenth century, understood the international system as divided not only along sovereignty lines, but also along the deeper fault line separating the Christian civilization of the “West” from the “East.”<sup>13</sup> America’s mission upon entering the war was precisely to prevent Germany’s drift away from the Christian and liberal tradition of the West, a path that the German people had taken at their peril when submitting to the will of the German *Reich* as if it was the supreme authority in all domains of social and individual life.<sup>14</sup>

As lay progressive intellectuals, Lippmann and Croly undoubtedly made references to the religious dimension of Western identity as a tribute they felt had to be paid to the dominant political discourse of the time, which was characteristically imbued with Christian concepts and images (suffice it to think of president Wilson’s sermon-like rhetoric). But there was more to it than that. Taking part in an orientation that would be more fully developed later in the twentieth century, liberal Atlanticists established a connection between political and economic freedom as it was intended in the West and the “Judeo-Christian” heritage, with its emphasis on individual responsibility (exemplified in the individual dimension of both sin and salvation) and the limits of political power in human societies.<sup>15</sup>

The vision espoused by liberal Atlanticists described the Atlantic community as the “progeny” of Christendom and therefore rested on an interpretation of history that stressed both the Roman-classical and the Christian

roots of the English and American Revolutions, and also underpinned a political discourse in which the emerging concept of a “liberal West” was presented as being contiguous with, if not the product of, the Christian Western tradition.<sup>16</sup>

## CHRISTIAN ATLANTICISM DURING THE INTERWAR PERIOD

If intervention in World War I had raised great expectations regarding America’s role in world politics, the central problem for internationalists during the interwar period instead became how to prevent the US from withdrawing from the international scene after the great disillusionment following Versailles. It is exactly within this context that Christian Atlanticism developed as a more mature intellectual perspective.

Christian Atlanticists had generally admired Wilson’s message of peace and fully subscribed to his vision of world order, which seemed to originate directly from his religious convictions as well as his lofty democratic ideals. Christian Atlanticists were more disappointed than they were disillusioned by the new international settlement and spent the years after the war both cultivating the ideal of world peace “by other means” (that is, in the absence of the United States’ active involvement in international organization) and engaging with “the world as it is.” This was suggested by a profound reexamination of the role of Christianity and Christians in both the domestic and international societies that combined a very creative form of ethical and religious idealism with strong political pragmatism, an interesting blend that some historians have labeled Christian Realism.<sup>17</sup>

Of the authors examined in this essay, Francis Miller best embodies the themes highlighted above, and his connections to Christian Realism and theologian Reinhold Niebuhr have been amply documented.<sup>18</sup> A religious and political activist from Virginia, Miller spent his life fighting the spread of the “culture of nationalism” and pursuing the ideal of the “Church Universal,” which to him was the only viable solution to international conflict.<sup>19</sup>

The fading of the Wilsonian vision of a democratic world order arising from the ruins of war—“a beautiful dream that soon vanished”<sup>20</sup>—convinced Miller that the only path to enduring peace was to educate new generations to the “presence” of God among men. As chairman of the World Student Christian Federation from 1929 and a supporter of the “World Christian” and “Ecumenical” movements (he later joined the World Council of Churches), Miller criticized political isolationism as a form of nationalism and warned that America’s rise to leadership could only be successful if the definition of the American national interest was broadened to include spiritual and ethical considerations of America’s place in the Christian order. Miller emphasized in 1929,

Our task is as gigantic . . . it is nothing less than . . . seeing to it that this tremendous economic outthrust from the United States to the rest of the world is supplemented or paralleled by another kind of outthrust . . . rooted in the mind and spirit of Jesus Christ—an outthrust of ethical concern and spiritual interest . . . we in America cannot hope to meet the situation unless we are working hand in glove with Europeans on questions common to our North Atlantic civilization . . . is it too much to ask of the American Christian community . . . to think and act in terms of Christendom . . . ?<sup>21</sup>

Just a year later, in 1930, Miller coauthored with his wife Helen Hill, an economist and later a correspondent for the *Economist* of London, a book that represents one of the most inspired, though often neglected, contributions to the American Atlanticist tradition preceding the cold war. *The Giant of the Western World* (originally entitled *The Return of the Mayflower*) offered a deliberately provocative and highly seductive reading of international developments that clearly departed from mainstream analysis and commentary.<sup>22</sup>

Its main contention was that the end of the war had not marked America's retreat to isolation but rather had laid the foundations of a "North-Atlantic civilization." "The axis of this interpretation," Miller and Hill emphasized, "is the assumption that the last decades . . . have seen the rise of a new unity which may be properly called a North-Atlantic civilization."<sup>23</sup> The huge volume of commodities, money, people, and ideas that had flowed from America to Europe during and especially after the war amounted to a true "American invasion of Europe," mirroring in many ways the original westward colonial movement that had brought European economic interests, peoples, and culture to North America.

The "Americanization of Europe" was in fact a fairly popular concept at the time around which a vast, though seldom rigorous and scientific, literature had emerged.<sup>24</sup> Miller and Hill's interpretation of the phenomenon was distinctive in that they insisted this dynamic must not be conceived, temptingly but simplistically, as America "taking over" Europe but rather as one that accompanied the emergence of a new civilization, the "North Atlantic civilization." Their vision of the Atlantic community clearly betrayed a sense of urgency: it legitimized, so to speak, American ascendancy by presenting the succession between Europe and America as centers of world power and the expansion of the American "empire" toward Europe as, in fact, episodes of a reunion, although a highly asymmetric one, between the different branches of the Christian tradition.

According to Miller and Hill, the growing influence that the American economy was exerting on Europe risked causing widespread resentment if it was not coupled with a clear message inspired by lofty political and spiritual ideals, i.e., that the idea of modernity embodied by America and exported to the rest of the world was fully consistent with the broader Western tradition.

With the exacerbation of nationalistic competition in Europe, Miller's religious reflections acquired an increasing sense of political urgency. While a lecturer at Yale Divinity School where he taught a class on "The Challenge to Contemporary Civilization," Miller developed an encompassing interpretation of internationalism founded on a Christian reading of history that singled out nationalism as a direct threat to the survival of the Western tradition.<sup>25</sup> In 1934, moreover, he participated in the first meeting of the "Younger Theologians" organized at Princeton by Henry P. Van Dusen, a leader of the YMCA and a respected theologian, to discuss questions of major concern regarding the American Christian community. This group, also referred to as the "Theologian Discussion Group," included Richard and Reinhold Niebuhr among its members and provided a breeding ground for Christian Realism in the 1930s.<sup>26</sup>

Those were the years when Van Dusen and Reinhold Niebuhr acted almost like the "tribunes" of a deeply divided American Christian community, which longed for a more active and effective presence of Christians on the American and world scenes.<sup>27</sup> Critical of mainstream liberalism, including "liberal theology," as lending itself to an ultimately individualistic interpretation of Christian life, Christian Realists concentrated their efforts on defeating the rampant culture of nationalism.<sup>28</sup> In 1935, Richard Niebuhr, Wilhelm Pauck, and Francis Miller coedited a book that was to become a central reference for the Christian Realist movement: *The Church Against the World*. The section written by Miller, "American Protestantism and the Christian Faith," warned American Protestant Churches that their "domestication" within the framework of the American national culture would be tantamount to accepting irrelevance and urged them instead to "grow out into the framework of Christendom" and lead the fight against nationalism.<sup>29</sup>

In fact, from at least the rise of Hitler onwards, Miller's message was primarily aimed at opening the eyes of Americans to the "nationalist challenge" and reviving in them a sense of ethical and political responsibility toward the rest of the world by condemning isolationism as immoral. In 1933, when only a few intellectuals were lucid enough to discern in Hitlerism a menace not just to the European order but also to America, Miller spoke of a "totalitarian" danger and denounced "the cult of the nation" for creating more and more followers in the America of the New Deal as well. "We are living in a time when a new type of state is coming into being in every part of the civilized world," Miller warned, "the Totalitarian State." "The nation-state so conceived," he explained, "becomes the end-all and be-all for its citizens . . . in a word, it becomes God." Against this perversion, Miller admitted that the efforts of single individuals or single churches would not be enough. Americans needed to rediscover the ideal of freedom that underpinned their political institutions and the loyalty to God that made them part of a larger community of peoples that transcended national lines: "the Christian answer to the sovereign claims

of a pagan organic society can only be given in terms of membership in another organic society—the Church.”<sup>30</sup>

Two other early opponents of totalitarianism came to similar conclusions: historians Carlton Hayes and Ross Hoffman, among the most outspoken proponents of Christian Atlanticism during World War II and the cold war.<sup>31</sup> Both converts to Roman Catholicism, Hayes and Hoffman gave a more conservative interpretation of the Atlantic community than Miller. Like the latter, however, they too came to the conclusion during the inter-war period that America’s greatest “sin” was its apparent surrender to the cultures of materialism and nationalism.

While developing a scholarly critique of the phenomenon of totalitarianism, Hayes and Hoffman also engaged in the articulation of a conservative political ideology that called for a reevaluation of tradition against the “degenerations” of modernity. They condemned “liberalism,” as opposed to “liberal conservatism,” as an aberration of the liberal Western tradition because it separated the principle of individual liberty from that of social obligation.<sup>32</sup> In an effort to rediscover the religious origins of the ideal of political freedom, they singled out secularization as a dangerous drift away from not just the Christian tradition but from democracy as well.

From the very beginning, in fact, Hayes’ scholarship concentrated on the sources of continuity in Western civilization, which he conceptualized as the community of peoples who, under the same Christian God, had come to practice the democratic ideal. In this context, Hayes was ready to concede that before transforming into an instrument with which to limit domestic freedom and justify imperialism abroad, nationalism had been consistent with the liberal tradition.<sup>33</sup> When it embodied an aspiration to independence and emancipation, attachment to the national community was justifiable and had in fact historically underpinned the movements of self-determination and unification of previously divided or warring communities. In Germany too, the original rationale of nationalism had been to unify and pacify, not divide and destabilize, as Hayes admitted.<sup>34</sup>

What, then, could explain the involution from the early to the contemporary imperialist and racist version of nationalism? According to Hayes, there had been many causes. The ultimate one, though, was “secularization,” a concept he interpreted rather broadly. Phenomena such as the spread of “materialism” and “individualism,” or the interpretation of world politics by Western political elites as a zero-sum game, were ultimately connected to the crisis of “authority” and “responsibility” determined by the progressive secularization of Western societies. Of course, Hayes recognized that the most direct drive behind nationalistic competition was economic and political advantage, and the most direct cause of both materialism and individualism was the rise of industrial capitalism.<sup>35</sup> However, according to Hayes, modernity had unfortunately acquired these characteristics because of the secularized interpretation according to which

progress—material and social as well as political—was seen as an emancipation from, rather than a movement toward, God.

This characteristically religious perspective also underpinned Hayes's analysis of the totalitarian phenomenon, which he saw in the tradition of nationalism in its extreme form but not in the Western political tradition; he was thus among those who emphasized its "novelty."<sup>36</sup> Hayes's understanding of totalitarianism revolved around the idea that such a regime was the "total" negation of tradition, an "all-out assault" on the defining principles of the West: "The dictatorial totalitarianism of today," stressed Hayes, "is a . . . revolt against the whole historic civilization of the West . . . against the peace of Christ, against the whole vast cultural heritage of the Christian Church . . . against the enlightenment, the reason, . . . the humanitarianism of the eighteenth century . . . the liberal democracy of the nineteenth."<sup>37</sup>

The subjugation of all forms of human activity to the authority of the state was read by Hayes as the sign that the totalitarian state was bent on not just sidelining religion but replacing God altogether with itself: "Masses of people who have lost contact with old gods want new ones," Hayes explained, "and now they get them—a Dionysus-like tribal god of blood and soil, a Lucretian god of fatalism and materialism."<sup>38</sup> The latter were Hayes's descriptions, in religious terms, of the Nazi and Communist ideologies that he condemned as being fundamentally similar in that they both entailed totalitarian projects. "Alike to Communists and to Fascists," Hayes noted, "the state is omniscient and infallible as well as omnipotent."<sup>39</sup>

A close friend of Hayes and a fellow convert to Catholicism, Ross Hoffman was certainly the most conservative among the Atlanticists considered in this study.<sup>40</sup> Like Miller, he too recognized the modernizing impact of the "American way"; and like Hayes, he too insisted that totalitarianism represented the gravest threat to "freedom." But the conservative message with which Christian Atlanticists often fed their vision of an Atlantic community had even greater potency in Hoffman's scholarship. "To recover and conserve the tie with the past, to take hold again upon the truths of experience enshrined in the tradition of Christendom, this is the prime need of twentieth-century western man," clarified Hoffman.<sup>41</sup>

Studied as one of the fathers of Catholic conservatism in twentieth-century America, Hoffman developed a conception of the Atlantic community that insisted on the antitradition dimension of not only totalitarianism but "liberalism" as well.<sup>42</sup> More precisely, Hoffman contended that the legacy of Christianity was the "Great Republic," a plural political order united under the same God that had blessed its community of followers by instilling in them the aspiration to freedom.<sup>43</sup> According to Hoffman, the political and spiritual integrity of the *res publica christiana* was undermined because virtually all the "ideologies" of modernity, starting with liberalism, had departed from tradition by denying the Christian foundations of principles such as freedom and democracy.<sup>44</sup>



Writing at the height of American isolationism, Hoffman rejected political aloofness but nonetheless drew a sharp line between the US and Europe when it came to their encounter with modernity. “The beginnings of our national community . . . coincided with the anti-historical Calvinist and Cartesian revolutions in the mind and soul of Europe,” Hoffman argued. “America’s renunciation of Europe synchronized with the emergence, in the old world, of the secularist conception of progress and the anti-traditionalist spirit of Enlightenment, which was to alienate several European generations from an intimate sense of their own past.”<sup>45</sup> Hoffman insisted that as the soon-to-be leader of the Western world, America should interpret its role as the restorer of the spiritual order that modern Europe, with its rationalist-secularist (heretical) ideologies, had undermined to the point of threatening the survival of Western civilization itself.

While advancing a harsh critique of liberalism, like Miller and Hayes, Hoffman also condemned totalitarianism as a godless ideology and a direct threat to the survival of the “Great Republic” of Christendom: “Such a State,” he emphasized, “recognizes no rights of man derivative from God . . . it does not exist for the individual and the family, but these exist for it.”<sup>46</sup>

However, Hoffmann differed from Miller and Hayes when it came to identifying America’s totalitarian rivals. He was even readier and more resolute to single out Soviet Russia as a threat to American democracy; but conversely, he was slower in targeting the Italian and German regimes of the 1930s as America’s enemies.<sup>47</sup> The fact that Germany and Italy seemed uninterested or at least incapable of eradicating the Church was read as a sign that, contrary to general belief, the German and Italian states were not totalitarian in the fullest sense and therefore not as “ungodly” as Soviet Russia.<sup>48</sup>

It was only at the outbreak of World War II that Hoffmann fully joined the campaign against nazism and fascism and subscribed to a reading of the international situation that depicted an epochal struggle between democracy on the one hand and autocracy (the Axis) on the other.

## THE ATLANTICIST CAMPAIGN OF 1939–1941

The American Atlanticist tradition proceeded with ebbs and flows throughout the first half of the twentieth century and peaked on the verge of the three major international conflicts that marked that age: the Great War, World War II, and the cold war. After breaking into the public debate in 1917 (thanks mainly to the reflections of Walter Lippmann), a second powerful wave of Atlanticism rose during the years between 1939 and 1941 when American internationalists asked for the neutrality legislation to be repealed in order to rescue the Allies in their struggle against the Axis. In 1941, Lippmann authored “The Atlantic and America” in *Life*.<sup>49</sup> The same year, Forrest Davis published *The Atlantic System*, a rereading of



the entire history of the US through its interaction with Europe across the Atlantic.<sup>50</sup> Even earlier, in 1938, the journalist Clarence Streit had come out with a plan for a “Union of the Atlantic democracies,” a book that originally combined the tradition of the “Atlantic system” with international federalism.<sup>51</sup>

As had been the case in 1917, the Atlanticist campaign of 1939 to 1941 also focused on getting the US into the war. Miller’s career was devoted to this cause. Miller had been involved with the internationalist Council on Foreign Relations since 1938. After the war started, he became a member of the interventionist Century Group, which advocated a declaration of war against Germany as early as 1940 and was one of the founders of Fight for Freedom, often referred to as the “Miller Group.”<sup>52</sup> One of the most outspoken proponents for arming the British, he actively worked together with other influential American internationalists to create the conditions for the “destroyers for bases” deal in 1940.<sup>53</sup>

While engaged on the political front, Miller kept elaborating on his religious views so as to anchor them to an even more clearly internationalist stance. Together with Niebuhr, Van Dusen, John Foster Dulles, and *Life* magazine editor Henry Luce, Miller made a critical contribution to the early life of *Christianity and Crisis*.<sup>54</sup> The latter was primarily the creation of Niebuhr, who wanted to use it to rival the *Christian Century*, the leading journal of liberal Protestantism that at the time held out for American neutrality.<sup>55</sup> As Heather Warren rightly points out, the success of *Christianity and Crisis* further encouraged Miller and the rest of the Christian realists to work toward a full-fledged articulation of an internationalist liberal theology, one that suggested an “ecumenical strategy” towards a “new world order.”<sup>56</sup>

The first issue of the magazine opened with an editorial eloquently entitled “The Crisis,” in which Miller condensed all the characteristic themes of religious Atlanticism and combined them with the general ones of the American Atlanticist tradition.<sup>57</sup> With the word “crisis” he was not just referring to the international crisis precipitated by Nazi Germany but also the deeper one that cut across Western civilization. “By Crisis we do not mean any . . . secondary symptoms . . . we mean the Crisis itself,” Miller emphasized, “. . . we mean that as Protestant Christians we stand confronted with the ultimate crisis of the whole civilization of which we are part and whose existence has made possible the survival of our type of faith and our type of Church.”<sup>58</sup>

According to Miller, it was time for resolve. America could drift toward secularism, materialism, and unfettered liberalism, or it could rediscover the message of the Pilgrim Fathers and appreciate again the Christian foundations of democracy. It could keep pursuing a policy of isolation and find itself alone in the midst of an “ocean of totalitarianisms,” or it could assume leadership of Western civilization in the struggle against totalitarianism.<sup>59</sup> “The conflict is between the free peoples of the entire North Atlantic area

and the tyrants who would destroy their democratic way of life,” as he dramatically put it. “We are witnessing the first effective revolution against Christian civilization since the days of Constantine,” he warned.<sup>60</sup> After describing the Atlantic as “the Ocean of Freedom” and characterizing American Christians as “the trustees of the North Atlantic society,” the editorial advocated immediate aid to Britain, starting with the passage of the Lend-Lease Bill.

As influential intellectuals during the interwar period, Christian Atlanticists tried to get involved in foreign policy after America’s entry into the conflict. Miller was sent to Europe to work for the Office of Strategic Services where he contributed, among other things, to the planning of the “Sussex” operation in anticipation of D-Day. After having played an important role in the Atlanticist campaign preceding intervention, Hayes, on his part, accepted the ambassadorship to Spain offered to him by President Roosevelt in 1942.<sup>61</sup>

President Roosevelt directed Hayes to do everything possible to prevent Spain’s participation in the war on the side of the Axis.<sup>62</sup> Hayes interpreted this task to mean the creation of stronger ties, especially at the economic level, between the US and Spanish governments, even if this implied maintaining cordial relations with some of the top figures in the Franco regime. It was Hayes’s assumption that the history of Spain could only be fully understood by considering the Spanish people as a natural member of the Atlantic community.<sup>63</sup> To him, the connection was unquestionable: Spanish national identity was simply inseparable from Christianity in general and Catholicism in particular.

Although chosen personally by Roosevelt and a self-described admirer of the president, Hayes’ Atlanticist, conservative approach to foreign policy did not dovetail with the progressive idealism informing FDR’s “globalism.” At the height of American-Soviet strategic cooperation, Hayes suggested a different course and tried to apply it to his diplomacy. He offered a rather revisionist interpretation of the Spanish Civil War as essentially a struggle between traditional Catholic Spain and communism.<sup>64</sup> To him, communism was an infiltration in the Spanish society, a force that aimed at separating one of the traditional branches of the Atlantic community from the rest of Christendom, whereas the Franco regime, however corrupted and imperfect, was consistent with the Spanish tradition. When applied to diplomacy, this approach meant tolerating Franco and helping Spanish authorities in their fight against communism.<sup>65</sup>

After his resignation, Hayes confided in Hoffman about his personal disappointment in Roosevelt. “To defeat totalitarian Germany we turn it over, with the major part of Europe, to totalitarian Russia,” he lamented. “At the same time, we neglect our natural friends and allies—Britain, France, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Scandinavia . . . We certainly don’t want war with Russia,” Hayes concluded, “but I am afraid we are unwittingly pursuing the course most likely to lead to it.”<sup>66</sup>

## TOWARD THE COLD WAR

Having reached a peak in 1940–1941, Atlanticism was then absorbed after Pearl Harbor into the broader galaxy of American internationalism, when it became one of the many ways in which to be pro-Allies. Between 1942 and 1945, when the United Nations was created, Atlanticism was arguably just one among the many approaches to internationalism, and not necessarily the most influential. The United States' decision to invest in a new universalistic organization seemed inspired by a "globalist" approach to order. It was not unlike the one adopted by Wilson during World War I that contradicted, or at least bypassed, the Atlanticist view whereby the international system was not an undifferentiated whole but the historical product of continuous competition among different civilizations. The rise of American globalism did not mean, however, that Atlanticism was doomed to fade. On the contrary, as a foreign policy perspective and an ideology, it experienced a revival with the outbreak of the cold war, when the idea of superpower cooperation proved an illusion and the international system broke down once again into competing blocs.

Miller, Niebuhr, Hayes, and Hoffman did not draw perfectly identical lessons from the war experience regarding how to build future peace. Yet their Atlanticist perspective, which had formed before World War II in the 1920s and 1930s when they had shared the same acute intellectual interest in the origins and contemporary meaning of the concept of "the West," translated into a similar approach regarding the question of world order after the conflict ended.

From the 1930s on, Miller, Hayes, and Hoffman all included Soviet Russia as one of the totalitarian states, singling out communism as an un-Christian, un-Western ideology.<sup>67</sup> Acceptance of the reality of US-Soviet cooperation during World War II was not due to any reversal of opinion on, let alone sudden fascination with, communism. Rather, cooperation was accepted because it was seen as necessary in order to win the war against Nazi Germany. It was also justified, especially by "Christian Realists," as the inevitable encounter with "evil" that any pursuit of "good" implied.

As soon as the Nazi threat faded and tensions emerged between the two superpowers, Christian Atlanticists generally sided with those who saw confrontation as hardly avoidable. Having been concerned with the threat posed by totalitarianism to Western civilization from early in the interwar period on, they could hardly persuade themselves that relations between the US and the Soviet Union would ever become completely "normal."

It should come as no surprise then that Christian Atlanticists actively contributed to the emergence of the American cold war ideology and added a religious flavor to it by portraying the competition between the two superpowers as one that opposed the Christian West on the one hand with the "godless" totalitarian regime of the Soviets on the other.<sup>68</sup> However, the

specific themes emphasized by the Christian Atlanticists varied at times, as did the time frame of their evolution into cold warriors.

Of the authors considered in this study, Hayes and Hoffman were perhaps the readiest to embrace the new reality and intellectual framework of the cold war. Having been highly suspicious of the ultimate aims of the Soviets, even at the height of American-Russian cooperation, they insisted that the US government be realistic about the UN when the war drew to a close, and they buried FDR's "one worldism" together with the many other illusions nourished by the war effort. The opposition to a universalistic approach to peace was underpinned by a particular interpretation of Atlanticism whereby the rise of the Atlantic community would not see the reemergence of a strong Europe but rather its absorption into a US-led Atlantic order.

Upon his nomination as president of the American Historical Association, Hayes delivered a lecture that was to make history in American academic circles.<sup>69</sup> Hayes discussed and corrected the arguments made by historian Frederick Jackson Turner, who had given a standard form to the "frontier thesis" in order to explain the evolution of American civilization and suggested that the US borders should be viewed, not as the perimeter of continental North America, but as the expanded boundaries of Christian Europe.<sup>70</sup>

The insistence on a common Western civilization was then accompanied by a firm critique of "one worldism," dismissed as "a leap from myopic nationalism to starry-eyed universalism."<sup>71</sup> Hayes quoted long passages of Lippmann's *U.S. War Aims*, which had fully articulated the concept of the Atlantic community, and contended that the UN could only function as an instrument of order if other security systems at the regional level, starting with the Atlantic system, were also consolidated. As Hayes explained, "Ourselves secure in such a citadel, we could do our full part in developing the new world order from wishful thinking to functioning reality."<sup>72</sup>

Hayes also advanced some reflections on postwar Europe. In particular, he rejected the view that if Europe could federate, peace and order would follow. As Hayes saw it, Europe was a highly diverse group of countries, some of which, like Great Britain and France, had ramified colonial dependencies and were therefore not purely European. All past attempts to unify Europe, Hayes noted, had culminated in wars, some of which had escalated into international conflicts involving the US as well. The solution, Hayes insisted, was not to be found in a united Europe but in the unity of the Atlantic community: "Not in an enforced or shaky European union but rather in a regional understanding among the nations of the Atlantic community are to be sought the peace and security of Europe and of ourselves, and the surest buttress of future world order."<sup>73</sup>

This line of thinking was also shared by Hoffman, who discarded European unification not just as unviable but also antitradition, that is, inconsistent with the notion of Christendom. The Catholic intellectual who had exalted the pluralistic character of the Atlantic order just a few years earlier

in *The Great Republic* nonetheless contended that the unity of Christendom could not be undermined by the creation of separate federations.<sup>74</sup>

Hoffmann went so far as to challenge the notion of “Europe” itself, which he dismissed as historically irrelevant. “Long ago, of course, there was a European commonwealth, but men called it Christendom, not Europe,” Hoffman noted polemically.<sup>75</sup> “Europe is an area wherein the Atlantic and Eurasian communities must find means of regulating their relations,” he further clarified.<sup>76</sup>

The demolition of the notion of Europe seemed functional to an interpretation of the postwar American strategy that exalted the role the US was called to play in the establishment of a truly Atlantic order, discouraging the view that America’s rescue of the European nations was mere philanthropy. “We have not yet grasped the great Atlantic conception,” Hoffman lamented. “We still conceive our business in Europe as a mission in political pedagogy, instead of an intervention to forge bonds with natural allies and thus safeguard our own interests.”<sup>77</sup>

If this was the line of thinking followed by Hayes and Hoffman, the group of Christian Atlanticists revolving around *Christianity and Crisis* embarked on a different course and praised American support of European unification, even though some also warned that this move could precipitate a military confrontation with the Soviets at the very heart of the Atlantic community.<sup>78</sup>

Niebuhr himself wrote extensively about the European situation, especially after completing a three-month trip to the continent in 1947. Like other Americans, Niebuhr noted with a mix of fascination and concern the extent to which the US had become a crucial factor on the European continent. “One cannot help but be struck in Europe,” Niebuhr admitted, “by the tremendously important position which America has acquired in the counsels of the world, chiefly because of our dominant economic power.”<sup>79</sup>

With respect to the UN and the more general question of American-Russian cooperation, *Christianity and Crisis* was slower in drawing dark conclusions and restrained from contributing to the emerging cold-war climate until it became clear that the Soviet policy in Europe was incompatible with American interests. In December 1945, Soviet actions were still considered tolerable. “The sense of horror that we have as we learn of the unspeakable that is taking place in all eastern Europe,” according to one article, “should be accompanied by the recognition that though Russian policy has made some conditions worse, the tragedy is in the first instance the result of the war’s terrible destruction.”<sup>80</sup>

Less than a year later, however, the tone and content of the articles were already markedly different.<sup>81</sup> “Resistance to Russian expansion in Europe” was “right.” “Limits must be there!” exclaimed John C. Bennet.<sup>82</sup> By the beginning of 1947, *Christianity and Crisis* had fully accepted a cold war framework for its commentary, although it insisted that communism be seen as a challenge to the spiritual and political identity of the West rather than an enemy to be countered primarily in military terms.<sup>83</sup>

Upon his return from Europe, Miller had tried to convince the staff of *Christianity and Crisis* of the offensive nature of Soviet policy, characterizing the conflict between the West and Russia as “anthropic.” “Between the American view of man and the current Russian view of man no compromise is possible or desirable,” he dramatized. “Consequently there can be no real cooperation between the US and the USSR.”<sup>84</sup>

Niebuhr, who had avoided considering Nazi Germany and Communist Russia as equally “evil,” started making this comparison between 1947 and 1948; his rhetoric grew to be more negative, although he always warned against employing unnecessarily confrontational tones.<sup>85</sup>

Increasingly alarmed by Soviet policy in Europe and highly skeptical of the UN as an instrument of peace, Christian Atlanticists cheered the creation of the North Atlantic Pact in 1949, a measure that they generally welcomed as a formalization of the security commitment that the US had long undertaken for the “freedom” of Europe. In truth, even the Christian Atlanticists’ support for the treaty was sometimes accompanied by specifications and qualifications, as was the case for other Atlanticists. Hayes, for instance, lamented that the pact culpably excluded Spain and Latin America.<sup>86</sup>

While *Christianity and Crisis* endorsed the treaty as a measure dictated by necessity, it also featured articles that advocated more encompassing initiatives to strengthen the ties among the Atlantic nations.<sup>87</sup> Niebuhr believed that the implications of this choice on the broader American strategy needed to be appreciated. According to him, the North Atlantic Pact completed “the logic of a policy which not only assumes our special responsibility to this democratic world but also assumes that peace depends . . . not so much upon the functions of the UN as upon the maintenance of preponderant power in the non-Communist world.”<sup>88</sup>

Miller, finally, cheered the treaty as “one of the great mile stones of human history” and was straightforward in linking this policy to the consolidation of US leadership: “The North Atlantic is the key to world control,” he remarked.<sup>89</sup> Later, when the pact evolved into an authentic military organization, Miller supported this development but urged that the moral and spiritual dimensions of the “American mission” not be neglected: “NATO means arms and dollars, but it means more . . . NATO means the free world . . . Can we . . . provide the moral and spiritual leadership without which our way of life may not survive?”<sup>90</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Born as an “internationalist religious perspective” aimed at countering isolationist tendencies in interwar America, Christian Atlanticism offered itself as a compass by which to orient American foreign policy during World War II and later contributed to the development of the “American cold-war

ideology.” Not all Christian Atlanticists, including those mentioned in this study, shared exactly the same view regarding the actual content of the Christian Atlanticist strategy that they outlined, with varying degrees of detail, for postwar America. This diversity, however, did not undermine an approach to international relations that was fundamentally similar, and Christian Atlanticism can therefore be fruitfully studied as an independent strand of both American internationalism and Atlanticism.

One of the defining elements of this perspective is certainly the reduction of the West to the Christian West and a religious interpretation of history and international relations that led to a presentation of the American liberal political tradition as inseparable from the Christian heritage of Western civilization. America’s rise to leadership was characteristically linked to the “restoration” of an order that had been challenged by the great ideologies of the twentieth century, from nationalism to communism, and that regimes such as Hitler’s and Stalin’s had vowed to overthrow.

When tensions emerged between the US and Soviet Russia over how to deal with postwar Europe and maintain peace, Christian Atlanticists suggested that political, military, and spiritual resources be invested into the consolidation of the Atlantic community, and they expressed skepticism of (when not open opposition to) the UN ever transforming into some kind of world government. Christian Atlanticists were among the first to equate the Atlantic community with the Free World, and they presented the defense of Europe and the containment of communism not just as compelling strategic interests, but also as a “mission” that the US was called and entitled to perform as both the spiritual leader and the most powerful nation of the West.

## NOTES

1. The vision of an “Atlantic system” linking the US to Western Europe was repeatedly evoked at the turn of the century by Henry Adams, an American historian and a close friend of Secretary of State John Hay. See Henry Adams, *The Education of Henry Adams* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, [1907] 1918). The American journalist Walter Lippmann first used the phrase “Atlantic community” in the months preceding the US intervention in World War I. In particular, see Walter Lippmann, “The Defense of the Atlantic World,” *New Republic* 10, no. 120 (1917): 59–61. The scholarship on pre-cold war Atlanticism has concentrated on four issues in particular: Atlanticism and American hegemony—for instance, see David P. Calleo and Benjamin M. Rowland, *America and the World Political Economy: Atlantic Dreams and National Realities* (Bloomington and London: Indiana University Press, 1973), especially 16–84; Atlanticism and the rise of political realism—see the seminal study by Robert E. Osgood, *Ideas and Self-Interest in America’s Foreign Relations: The Great Transformation of the Twentieth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953); Atlanticism and Anglo-American relations—for instance, see Priscilla Roberts, “The Anglo-American Theme: American Visions of an Atlantic Alliance, 1914–1933,” *Diplomatic History* 21, no. 3 (1997): 333–64; Atlanticism and international federalism—in par-



- particular, see the PhD dissertation by Tiziana Stella on the American federalist Clarence Streit, "Federalismo e atlantismo nella politica estera degli Stati Uniti: il contributo di Clarence Streit," (unpublished PhD dissertation, University of Pavia, 1997).
2. On the concept of "internationalism," see Warren F. Kuehl and Gary B. Ostrower, "Internationalism," in *Encyclopedia of American Foreign Policy*, vol. 2, ed. Alexander DeConde, Richard Dean Burns, Fredrick Logevall, and Louise Ketz (2001) vol. 2. (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2001), 241–58. On the early history of American internationalism, see Akira Iriye, *From Nationalism to Internationalism: US Foreign Policy to 1914* (London and New York: Routledge, 1977).
  3. more detailed presentation of the authors and sources examined in this study will be provided in the following text.
  4. On the concept of American exceptionalism see, amid a vast literature, Daniel T. Rodgers, "Exceptionalism," in *Imagined Histories: American Historians Interpret the Past*, ed. Anthony Molho and Gordon S. Wood (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998), 21–40.
  5. For a discussion, see Gerard Delanty, *Inventing Europe: Idea, Identity, Reality* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1995).
  6. The son of Irish immigrants, Mahan attended the Naval Academy and served the Union in the American Civil War as a lieutenant on various ships. In 1885, he was offered a professorship in naval history and tactics at the newly established Naval War College and shortly after his appointment became one of the most respected experts on naval affairs and commentators on international politics. Mahan's masterpiece is *The Influence of Sea Power upon History, 1660–1783* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1890).
  7. Toward the end of his career, Mahan published the book *Harvest Within*, which summarized his religious beliefs and stood almost as the spiritual testament of a man whose name had been more commonly associated with the secular world of battles and wars. Alfred T. Mahan, *The Harvest Within: Thoughts on the Life of the Christian* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1909).
  8. On Mahan's approach to world politics, see the interesting comparative analysis by Charles D. Tarlton, "The Styles of American International Thought: Mahan, Bryan, and Lippmann," *World Politics* 17, no. 4 (1965): 584–614. On Mahan's Christian inspiration, see Robert Seager II, "Alfred Thayer Mahan: Christian Expansionist, Navalist, and Historian," in *Admirals of the New Steel Navy: Makers of the American Naval Tradition, 1880–1930*, ed. James C. Bradford (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1990).
  9. Mahan often portrayed the Atlantic ocean as the internal sea of Western civilization: "Bordered on either shore by the European family in the strongest and most advanced types of political development," Mahan once noted, "the Atlantic ocean no longer severs, but binds together . . . the once divided children of the same mother." Alfred T. Mahan, "A Twentieth-Century Outlook," in *The Interest of America in Sea Power, Present and Future* (Port Washington: Kennikat Press, [1897] 1970), 259.
  10. See Alfred T. Mahan, *The Problem of Asia and its Effect on International Policies* (New York: Harper Bros., 1900). See also idem, "Relations between the East and the West," in *The Interest of America in International Conditions* (Boston: Parkhill, 1910), 125–84.
  11. Mahan, "A Twentieth-Century Outlook," in *The Interest of America in Sea Power, Present and Future*, 243.
  12. For a discussion, see John A. Thompson, *Reformers and War: American Progressive Publicists and the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987). Though of different descent—Lippmann was a



- third-generation German-Jew and Croly was the son of an Irish-immigrant father and an English mother—both were raised in the metropolitan North East in middle-class families, received their education at Ivy League universities, and came to be among the most influential intellectual figures of the Progressive era. The best biography of Lippmann remains Ronald Steel's *Walter Lippmann and the American Century* (New York: Vintage Books, 1980). For a biography of Croly, see David W. Levy, *Herbert Croly of the New Republic: The Life and Thought of an American Progressive* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1985).
13. Both Lippmann and Croly had limited experience with international affairs when World War I broke out. Croly's masterpiece, *The Promise of American Life* (New York: Macmillan, 1909) was one of the manifestos of Progressivism and already contained an important reflection on American foreign policy that emphasized both the American democratic tradition and the Christian identities of both America and Western Europe.
  14. For instance, see Lippmann, "The Defense of the Atlantic World."
  15. These concepts will be more thoroughly discussed in the following text. The American Atlanticist who most emphasized these elements is the historian Carlton J. H. Hayes, especially in *Christianity and Western Civilization* (Stanford, CT: Stanford University Press, 1954). Key to the development of this conception was British philosopher Lord Acton; in particular, see William H. McNeill, ed., *Essays in the Liberal Interpretation of History: Selected Papers by Lord Acton* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967).
  16. This aspect is discussed in William O'Reilly, "Genealogies of Atlantic History," *Atlantic Studies* 1 (2004): 66–84. O'Reilly correctly notes that Lippmann frequently mentioned Thomas Aquinas as a central intellectual influence on the English and American revolutions.
  17. In particular, see Heather A. Warren, *Theologians of a New World Order: Reinhold Niebuhr and the Christian Realists, 1920–1948* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997). See also Robin W. Lovin, *Reinhold Niebuhr and Christian Realism: God, Ethics, Freedom, Politics, Justice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995). For a discussion, see Gary Dorrien, *The Making of American Liberal Theology: Idealism, Realism, and Modernity, 1900–1950* (Louisville, KY, and London: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003), especially 435 and ff.
  18. Warren, *Theologians of a New World Order*; see especially chapters 2, 4, and 6.
  19. The son of a Presbyterian minister, Miller went to Europe after a relatively quiet upbringing in Virginia, first to serve in the army during World War I, then to study international relations and theology at Oxford on a Rhodes Scholarship. During the postwar period, he served as Chairman of the World's Student Christian Federation between 1929 and 1938. As the organization director of the Council on Foreign Relations from 1938 to 1941, he made a critical contribution to the public campaign for American intervention in World War II. During the conflict, he was sent to Europe to work for the Office for Strategic Services and was promoted to colonel while serving on General Eisenhower's staff. A representative of the Fairfax County for the Democratic Party at the Virginia House of Delegates, he unsuccessfully ran for senator in 1952 against Harry Flood Byrd. Biographical information on Miller's life and career can be found in various books and articles in which he and his wife, Helen Hill, reconstructed the origins of their Atlanticist approach to international relations. In particular, see Miller's autobiography, *Man From the Valley: Memoirs of a 20th-Century Virginian* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1971) and Helen Hill's "testament" to

- her children, *Yours for Tomorrow: A Personal Testament of Freedom* (New York: Farrar & Rinehart, 1943).
20. Miller, *Man from the Valley*, 36.
  21. Miller, "Americanism and Christianity," address delivered before the National Assembly of Student Secretaries (Estes Park, CO, July 1929), box 9, 28–30, Francis P. Miller Papers, Alderman Library, University of Virginia.
  22. Francis P. Miller and Helen D. Hill, *The Giant of the Western World: America and Europe in a North-Atlantic Civilization* (New York: William Morrow, 1930). Information on the genesis of the book, including some of the early drafts, can be found in Francis P. Miller Papers, boxes 84 and 85.
  23. Miller and Hill, *The Giant of the Western World*, 2.
  24. Miller and Hill had initially considered cowriting the book with one of the most popular European authors on the topic, the Frenchman Andre Siegfried who had published *Etas Unis d'Aujourd'hui* in 1927, which was translated into English in *America Comes of Age* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1927). See Hill to Andre Siegfried, 18 June 1930, Helen Hill Miller Papers, Schlesinger Library, Harvard University.
  25. Miller was invited to Yale by theologian Richard Niebuhr, Reinhold Niebuhr's brother. His collaboration ended in 1934. See Miller Papers, box 126, Yale Divinity School.
  26. Warren, *Theologians of a New World Order*, 60–75.
  27. The son of a German evangelical pastor, Niebuhr had first gained fame among theological and political circles with his book *Does Civilization Need Religion? A Study in the Social Resources and Limitations of Religion in Modern Life* (New York: Macmillan, 1929). See also Reinhold Niebuhr, *An Interpretation of Christian Ethics* (New York: Harper Bros., 1935).
  28. In a private letter to Reinhold Niebuhr dated 1933, which focused on theology but also discussed the situation in Germany, Miller wrote: "I am in entire sympathy with your battle against liberal illusions and radical utopias. You have rendered a very important service to the Church of Christ by your onslaught against these weak elements in the thought of our contemporaries." Miller to Niebuhr, 24 April 1933, container 9, Reinhold Niebuhr Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.
  29. See Francis P. Miller, "American Protestantism and the Christian Faith," in *The Church Against the World*, ed. Richard Niebuhr, Wilhelm Pauck, and Francis P. Miller (Chicago and New York: Willet, Clark, 1935). The quotation is drawn from Miller, *Man from the Valley*, 69.
  30. This and previous quotations are drawn from Miller, "The Christian Community and the Nation State," 1 August 1933, Francis P. Miller Papers, Alderman Library, University of Virginia, box 10. Similar considerations were also repeated in "The New Religion of Nationalism," Miller Papers, box 10, "Christian Articles: 1929–1941," 1–2.
  31. Carlton J. H. Hayes was born in Afton, NY and began teaching history at Columbia in 1907. He served in Europe during World War I in the US Military Intelligence Division of the General Staff. During World War II, he served as US ambassador to Spain between 1942 and 1944. Hayes became a leading Catholic layman and was long the cochairman (1925–45) of the National Conference of Christians and Jews. He retired from Columbia only in 1950 after establishing himself as a world-renowned scholar of nationalism and totalitarianism. A close friend of Hayes, Ross Hoffman taught history of political thought at Fordham, the Jesuit University of New York, and was an active contributor of *Thought*, a conservative scientific quarterly edited by Rev. Gerald Groveland Walsh. Biographical information about

- Hayes can be found in an unpublished autobiography, box 8, Carlton J. H. Hayes Papers, Butler Library, Columbia University.
32. Although supporting the Democratic Party and approving Roosevelt leadership, Hayes was a self-described “conservative,” a term which he understood in a characteristically Christian sense. In a letter to Peter Viereck, the author of *Conservatism Revisited*, he wrote: “You have produced a veritable vademecum for persons, like myself, who can be ambiguously described as ‘liberal conservatives’ or ‘conservative liberals’ . . . I think I would go further than you in associating the conservation of real liberty with the Christian Religion, and in particular with Catholic Christianity.” Hayes to Peter Viereck, 5 September 1949, Hayes Papers, box 12.
  33. See Carlton J. H. Hayes, *The Historical Evolution of Modern Nationalism* (New York: R. R. Smith, 1931).
  34. Hayes conducted extensive research into the roots of German nationalism and highlighted the contribution made by eminent liberals to such thinking. He noted for instance the critical contribution provided by Johann Herder, the German philosopher of the *Sturm und Drang* whose “cultural nationalism,” Hayes explained, “was not an end in itself; it was a means of understanding and appreciating humanity as a whole.” “Herder,” Hayes argued, “was the prophet of [a] liberal self-determining nationalism . . . equally good and rightful for all races and all continents.” Carlton J. H. Hayes, “Contributions of Herder to the Doctrine of Nationalism,” *American Historical Review* 32, no. 4 (1927): 719–36.
  35. See Carlton J. H. Hayes, *A Generation of Materialism, 1871–1900*, 3rd edition (New York, London: Harper, 1941).
  36. See Carlton J. H. Hayes, “The Challenge of Totalitarianism,” *The Public Opinion Quarterly* 2, no. 1 (1938): 21–26. See also idem, “The Novelty of Totalitarianism in the History of the Western Tradition,” *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 82, no. 1 (1940): 91–102.
  37. See Hayes, “The Novelty of Totalitarianism”
  38. *Ibid.*, 100.
  39. *Ibid.*, 98.
  40. Some biographical information on Hoffmann can be found in Patrick Allitt, *Catholic Intellectuals and Conservative Politics in America, 1950–1985* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993).
  41. Ross J. S. Hoffman, *Tradition and Progress and Other Historical Essays in Culture, Religion, and Politics* (Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Company, 1938), 17. See also Hoffman’s earlier work, *Restoration* (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1934).
  42. In particular, see Patrick Allitt, *Catholic Intellectuals*, especially “Catholic Conservatives and the 1950s,” 49–82.
  43. Ross J. S. Hoffman, *The Great Republic: A Historical View of the International Community and the Organization of Peace* (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1942).
  44. In a series of essays written in the 1930s, Hoffman articulated this central thesis by clarifying his position on the main issues being debated among Catholic and other intellectuals of his time. See Hoffman, *Tradition and Progress and Other Historical Essays in Culture, Religion, and Politics*, (Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Company, 1938), and *The Will to Freedom* (London and New York: Sheed & Ward, 1935).
  45. Hoffman, *Tradition and Progress*, 2.
  46. *Ibid.*, “The Church and the Totalitarian State,” 116–29.
  47. “The [1917] revolution,” Hoffman wrote, “aimed at nothing less than the abolition of one culture and the creation of a new one . . . what was wanted

- was a new kind of man altogether different from traditional Christian man . . . its most significant work was not the overthrow of feudalism, capitalism, and imperialism, but of Christian Orthodoxy.” Hoffman, *Tradition and Progress*, 121.
48. Especially Fascist Italy, which had signed a “concordat” with the Vatican in the late 1920s, was initially viewed with a mixture of curiosity and fascination by Hoffman who appreciated the “corporative” and “organic” nature of the Italian state—corporatism and organicism being crucial principles of a conservative society for him. See Hoffman, *The Organic State: An Historical View of Contemporary Politics* (New York and London: Sheed & Ward, 1939); See also Hoffman’s earlier work *The Will to Freedom*, especially “Fascism, Communism and Traditional Reaction,” 21–66.
  49. Walter Lippmann, “The Atlantic and America: The Why and When of Intervention,” *Life*, 7 April 1941.
  50. Forrest Davis, *The Atlantic System: The Story of Anglo-American Control of the Seas* (New York: Reynal & Hitchcock, 1941).
  51. Clarence K. Streit, *Union Now: A Proposal for a Federal Union of the Democracies of the North Atlantic* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1939). Advance proofs of the book were published in October 1938. See Stella, “Federalismo e Atlantismo.”
  52. For an analysis of interventionist groups and movements on the verge of the American intervention in World War II and the role of Miller in particular, see Mark L. Chadwin, *The Warhawks: American Interventionists before Pearl Harbor* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1968). The Century Group was founded by Henry P. Van Dusen, the head of New York’s Union Theological Seminary in 1940.
  53. Lippmann actively work for this result too, as rightly noted by his biographer Ronald Steel; see Ronald Steel, *Walter Lippmann and the American Century* (New York: Little, Brown, 1980), 384. The key figure on the British side was the federalist Atlanticist, Lord Lothian (Philip Kerr), then serving as British Ambassador to Washington.
  54. A lawyer and later a US Senator who served under President Eisenhower as Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles was perhaps the closest to Christian Atlanticists among US statesmen. In particular, see Mark G. Toulouse, *The Transformation of John Foster Dulles: From Prophet of Realism to Priest of Nationalism* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1985).
  55. On *Christianity and Crisis* see Mark Hulsether, *Building a Protestant Left: Christianity and Crisis Magazine, 1941–1993* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1999). See also Warren, *Theologians of a New World Order*, especially 97–101.
  56. Warren, *Theologians of a New World Order*, 94–115.
  57. “The Crisis,” *Christianity and Crisis* 1, no. 1 (1941): 1–2.
  58. *Ibid.*, 1.
  59. On the impact that the victory of German totalitarianism would have on American society and America’s position in the world, see the book by Miller’s wife, Helen Hill, and Herbert Agar, *Beyond German Victory* (Cornwall: Cornwall Press, 1940). The book imagined the domestic and international scenarios that would follow a German victory and concluded that America, as Americans knew it, could survive in a world dominated by the Nazis.
  60. *Ibid.*, 2.
  61. Thanks to William M. Agar, an internationalist Catholic involved with the Council on Foreign Relations, Hayes and other Catholic intellectuals were attracted to “Fight for Freedom,” thus establishing a connection with the Christian Atlanticists inside the Miller Group. The support of eminent Cath-

- olic figures was, of course, deemed critical for the success of the Atlanticist campaign because Roman Catholicism appeared to remain a bastion of neutralism. See “Fight For Freedom,” Francis P. Miller Papers, Alderman Library, University of Virginia, box 25.
62. See “Spanish Papers,” Hayes Papers, box 3. See also the correspondence quoted by Hayes in his book *Wartime Mission in Spain, 1942–1945* (New York: Macmillan, 1945).
  63. Hayes further elaborated on this argument after his ambassadorship. In particular, see Carlton J. H. Hayes, *The US and Spain: An Interpretation* (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1951).
  64. *Ibid.*
  65. Hayes was harshly criticized during his ambassadorship for being too soft on Franco and was targeted by some of the American press as a “Fascist.” To some, the mounting criticism of Hayes’s conduct in Spain explains why Roosevelt did not renew his post after the presidential elections of 1944. See Ernest K. Lindley and Edward Weintal, “How We Dealt with Spain: American Diplomacy in Madrid, 1940–1944,” *Harper’s Magazine* (December 1944): 23–33.
  66. Hayes to Hoffman, 8 August 1945, Hayes Papers, box 2.
  67. Niebuhr encouraged Americans to avoid a self-righteous approach when dealing with Communist Russia and to distinguish between Nazi and Soviet forms of totalitarianism, but this had not undermined the notion that communism was a rival way of thinking and an alternative model of society to that of the West.
  68. On the contribution that religious themes and concepts made to American cold-war ideology in the early aftermath of World War II, see Dianne Kirby, “Divinely Sanctioned: The Anglo-American Cold War Alliance and the Defense of Western Civilization and Christianity, 1945–48,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 35, no. 3 (2000): 385–412.
  69. Carlton J. H. Hayes, “The American Frontier: Frontier of What?” *American Historical Review* 51, no. 2 (1946): 199–216, available online at [http://www.historians.org/INFO/AHA\\_History/cjhhayes.htm](http://www.historians.org/INFO/AHA_History/cjhhayes.htm).
  70. See Frederick Jackson Turner, “The Significance of the Frontier in American History,” lecture delivered to the American Historical Association at the World Columbian Exposition of Chicago, 1893; available online at <http://xroads.virginia.edu/~HYPER/TURNER/chapter1.html>. In his lecture, Hayes urged that academic curricula be reformed so as to place greater emphasis on the concept of a “Western civilization” than on that of an “American civilization.”
  71. *Ibid.*
  72. *Ibid.* Hayes’s opposition to “one worldism” became harsher in subsequent years. For instance, see Carlton J. H. Hayes, *Christianity and Western Civilization* (Stanford, CT: Stanford University Press, 1954).
  73. Hayes, “The American Frontier,” 5.
  74. Ross J. S. Hoffman, “Europe and the Atlantic Community,” *Thought* 20, no. 76 (1945): 21–36.
  75. *Ibid.*, 35.
  76. *Ibid.*, 35. On the concept of Eurasia as developed by Hoffmann, see also “The West and Soviet Eurasia,” *Sign* 25 (August 1945): 5–8.
  77. *Ibid.*, 34.
  78. See, among the many articles on America’s policy toward Europe, “American Power and European Health,” *Christianity and Crisis* 7, no. 10 (1947): 1–2.
  79. *Ibid.*, 2.
  80. *Christianity and Crisis* 5, no. 21, “America and Russia” (1945): 1–2.

81. See, for instance, *Christianity and Crisis* 6, no. 21, "Toward a Christian Approach to International Issues" (1946): 1–3.
82. *Christianity and Crisis* 6, no. 31 "The Russian-Communist Drive for Power" (1946): 1–2.
83. In particular, see *Christianity and Crisis* 8, no. 8, "Our Mistaken Approach to Communism" (1948): 57–8.
84. Francis P. Miller, "America's New Foreign Policy," *Christianity and Crisis* 7, no. 7 (1947): 3.
85. For instance, see Reinhold Niebuhr, "Two Forms of Tyranny," *Christianity and Crisis* 8, no. 1 (1948): 3–5. Niebuhr had even flirted with communist ideas in his youth and had participated in the activities of the Socialist Party of America.
86. For instance, see Carlton J. H. Hayes, "Our Heritage of Freedom," address to Catholic University Alumni Association, 12 November 1949, Carlton J. H. Hayes Papers, Butler Library, Columbia University, box 13. See also Carlton J. H. Hayes, "A Defense of Atlantic Solidarity," *Thought* 26, no. 100 (1951): 25–32. Hayes became one of the leading sponsors of Spanish membership in NATO and wrote extensively about the role of Spain in the Atlantic community.
87. See Reinhold Niebuhr, "The North Atlantic Pact," *Christianity and Crisis* 9, no. 9 (1949): 65–66. After discussing some of the most frequent objections to the pact, the editorial actually concluded that it could be questioned "whether it is advisable to organize the West too tightly." In the same issue, however, an article by John A. Vieg criticized the inclination to look at the pact as an end in itself rather than a first step towards greater integration. John A. Vieg, "Atlantic Pact or Democratic Union?" *ibid.*, 70–71.
88. Quotations are from Reinhold Niebuhr, "The North Atlantic Pact." Niebuhr continued to reflect on the role of the Atlantic community in international relations throughout the cold war. For instance, see "Germany and Western Civilization," in *Germany and the Future of Europe*, Reinhold Niebuhr, Hans J. Morgenthau, Reinhold Niebuhr, eds., (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951); and "The Moral and Spiritual Content of the Atlantic Community," Paper for the National Business Committee for NATO, 1954, Niebuhr Papers, box 16.
89. Francis P. Miller, "Remarks Before the Student Legal Forum of the University of Virginia," 4 April 1949, Francis P. Miller Papers, Alderman Library, University of Virginia, box 104.
90. Francis P. Miller, "America's Role in the North Atlantic Community," address at the Annual Meeting of the Huguenot Society of South Carolina (Charleston, 13 April 1951), Francis P. Miller Papers, Alderman Library, University of Virginia, box 106.



## 4 Remapping America

### Continentalism, Globalism, and the Rise of the Atlantic Community, 1939–1949

*Marco Mariano*

The early months of 1941 were crucial both for the policies that led to the US intervention in World War II and for the discursive strategies that advocated such intervention among policy makers and the general public alike. Not only would Congress pass the Lend-Lease legislation in March, devised by President Roosevelt to support Britain's war effort, but one month later, Henry Luce's well-known "American Century" editorial in *Life* magazine would also provide American internationalism with a resounding call to arms.

*Foreign Affairs*, the quarterly journal of the Council on Foreign Relations, was an influential voice in this national conversation. In April 1941, it published "The Myth of Continents," a study by the economist Eugene Staley that tackled one of the questions underlying that conversation: What was the place of the US in a world threatened by the impact of the European war? Staley's was a pointed critique of the "continentalist" vision embraced by isolationists and a spirited case for US involvement in the Atlantic area as the best defense against Nazi expansion. In essence, Staley targeted the widespread notions of economic self-sufficiency and strategic invulnerability of the American hemisphere.

Geography was crucial in his argument against the Western Hemisphere as a "natural" political and economic unit. Assuming Madison, Wisconsin—home of isolationist leader Philip La Follette—as a vantage point, Staley informed readers that "no capital in Europe, including Moscow, is as far from Madison as is Buenos Aires, and only one capital (Athens) is as far as Rio de Janeiro."<sup>1</sup> Continental proximity was a myth rooted in the revered tradition of the Monroe Doctrine and a distorted teaching of geography; oceans were links more than barriers to communication, travel, and transport. Consequently, Staley argued that the Atlantic was vital to American prosperity and security.

Staley's indictment of hemispheric orthodoxy was part of a vibrant, unprecedented discussion of geography and its relation to American power and security. In the early 1940s, arguments over the place of the US in world affairs were ubiquitous among policy makers, both behind closed

doors and in the media. At crucial times during the war, Roosevelt took the lead in the geographic education of the American public. In a fireside chat in February 1942, he repeatedly asked his audience to “look at the map” in order to understand the Anglo-American war strategy.<sup>2</sup> In fact, I argue that this booming interest in and use of geography within the foreign policy establishment, as well as in the public sphere, was part of a deeper discussion about American identity at a time when the war prompted an effort “to redefine the nation’s relationship to the world and, in the process, to redefine America’s sense of itself.”<sup>3</sup>

My attempt is part of a growing body of literature that situates the ideology of American foreign relations in the context of constructing national identity and affirming nationalist hegemonic narratives. From this perspective, the role of the United States in world affairs is studied in relation to the effort to define America as an “imagined community,” especially at times of international crisis when a purely domestic definition of identity was made all the more difficult by the ubiquitous presence of the Other, a real or perceived threat.<sup>4</sup>

The early 1940s was a time of competing American outlooks on world affairs, which reflected competing notions of national identity. I argue that disputes over geography were relevant in the redefinition of American identity vis-à-vis the external challenge posed by World War II and, consequently, contributed to shaping the prevailing American perspectives on world affairs. Were American cities closer to the capitals of Latin America, as the hemispheric “myth of continents” implied, or to the capitals of Europe, as Staley’s Atlantic outlook suggested? The construction of a usable geography, as well as the narration of a usable past, was essential for locating the nation within the dynamic scenario of the early 1940s. Continentalist advocates of hemispherism, Atlanticist advocates of aid to Britain, and globalist advocates of free trade all subscribed to specific “metageographies,” understood as “the set of spatial structures through which people order their knowledge of the world: the often unconscious frameworks that organize studies of history, sociology, anthropology, economics, political science, or even natural history.”<sup>5</sup>

This essay discusses the emergence of the Atlantic community as an influential metageographic notion in 1940s America by framing it in its historical context. In fact, the late 1930s and early 1940s were marked by continentalism’s enduring hold and the legacy of the Monroe Doctrine, which reflected a distinctively different view of the *place* of the US in the world, as well as by the resurgent appeal of a globalist view of America’s role in world affairs, which by contrast stemmed from a spaceless, or postgeographic premise. The Atlantic community is studied here as a cultural and political construction meant to frame as “natural” what was in fact the consequence of a deliberate nationalist strategy: the rise of the US to political, military, economic, and cultural hegemony within “the West.”



A discussion of the role metageography played in this process highlights a paradox. On the one hand, the very reference to the “Atlantic” in the construction of a new Western identity reveals that arguments about space played a crucial role in making American hegemony seem natural. On the other hand, uses of geography have been largely neglected in studies of the cultural foundations of transatlantic relations. Geography often gets lost as an object of historical inquiry because of its effectiveness as an ideological tool and its ability to make seem “natural” what is political. Recently, scholars have begun to address how geographical knowledge is constructed and communicated; the objectivity of cartography has been challenged by studies showing how maps are culturally constructed means of representing knowledge.<sup>6</sup> However, diplomatic historians have been generally reluctant to incorporate such perspectives in their research.

This is not to say that geographical knowledge is nothing but a matter of cultural construction. As Edward Said has made clear in his discussion of geography’s role in the construction of identity, “there is no use in pretending that all we know about time and space, or rather history and geography, is more than anything else imaginative.” Here, I believe the challenge lies in uncovering “the political motivations behind metageographical conceptualizations, without implying that they are all reducible to strategic interests.”<sup>7</sup>

## THE ORTHODOXY: CONTINENTALISM AND MONROEISM

The rise of the Atlantic community as a dominant metageographical concept in the US is best understood if we consider the pre–World War II orthodoxy. The prevailing assumption about the place of the US in the world was informed by “continentalism,” or “hemispherism” as it came to be called in the discussion about US neutrality in the 1930s. It was based on self-evident facts: the Atlantic Ocean separated the New World from the Old; the US, together with Central and South America, was part of the Western Hemisphere; the Americas shared one unified landmass, artificially broken into two parts by the Panama Canal. Based on these geographical foundations, continentalism had developed into a grand narrative about America’s place in the world with a relevant impact on both the conduct of and discourse about US foreign policy.

By the eve of World War II, the Monroe Doctrine had been providing the diplomatic dimension of continentalism’s metageography for more than a century. It is hard to overestimate the influence of the “diplomatic declaration of independence” announced in 1823 and continually adapted and negotiated in the following decades. The Monrovia sacred text offered not only a guideline for diplomacy at crucial times for American foreign relations, but also an ideology that was instrumental for defining the American exceptionalist identity by means of opposition, as against an Other, and for

merging the contradictory claims of unilateralism, nationalism, and anticolonialism into a single narrative. As David Ryan argues,

The “two spheres principle” asserted differences and affirmed US nationalism. It enhanced security and identified the US as a progressive force in history . . . The conceptual division of the world . . . enhanced the discourse centred on civilization and barbarism, or of “orientalism.” It reappeared at many subsequent junctures, setting the West aside from and above, at least on the ideological level, the rest.<sup>8</sup>

The cartographic foundation for such orthodoxy was provided by the sixteenth-century Mercator map, which rendered the separation between the Old World and the New by visualizing the earth as a cylinder rather than as a globe. It emphasized the size of the oceans and their function as defensive barriers and providers of “free security.” It also omitted the poles, most conspicuously the Arctic area, which would turn out to be crucial as a bridge between North America and Northwestern Europe during World War II.<sup>9</sup>

The tenets of the Monroe Doctrine—first and foremost, the separation of the Americas and Europe as two distant spheres—reflected and reinforced this continental view of the location of the US in the world. There is no consensus over the influence of the Monroe Doctrine’s legacy on the ideology of American foreign policy in the twentieth century, partly because of Monroeism’s versatility, which throughout America’s history has been appropriated by advocates of a wide range of agendas from inward-looking isolation to assertive globalism. Among those who emphasize Monroeism’s enduring impact in the twentieth century, Walter LaFeber has stressed that the formulation of the “noninterference” principle in Monroe’s address sheds light on a long-term contradiction in American thinking on foreign affairs. The US required a total ban on European intervention in American affairs, with no exceptions. It also pledged not to interfere in European affairs, with President Monroe stating that “in the war of European powers *in matters relating to themselves* we have never taken any part, nor does it comport with our policy to do so.” This qualification, according to LaFeber, was meant to have it both ways: “Under certain circumstances—which the United States could define on its own—Americans could interfere in European affairs.”<sup>10</sup>

The ability of the Monroe Doctrine tradition to absorb the tension between the assertion of a spatially defined American sphere of influence in the Western Hemisphere and the rejection of the very notion of sphere of influence elsewhere—which paved the way toward projecting American influence worldwide—accounts for its enduring influence during the first half of the twentieth century. The resilience of Monroeism as the foreign-policy dimension of the continentalist view of American identity is perhaps best appreciated through a comparison between Woodrow Wilson’s and Franklin Roosevelt’s attempts to cope with it in the context of global war.

On the eve of the US intervention in World War I, Wilson proposed in his characteristically emphatic style that “the nations should with one accord adopt the doctrine of President Monroe as the doctrine of the world: that no nation should seek to expand its polity over any other nation or people, but that every people should be free to determine its own polity, its own way of development, unhindered, unthreatened, unafraid, the little along with the grand and the powerful.” However, his globalization of the Monroe Doctrine, which he tried to purge of geographic premises and sphere-of-influence implications, was unacceptable to American senators. A few months later, in the debate over the ratification of the Covenant of the League of Nations, many of its critics opposed Article X on collective security exactly because it did not explicitly guarantee the US unilateral, exclusive freedom of action in the Western Hemisphere, among other things.<sup>11</sup> Apparently, Wilson’s escape from both geography and history was out of touch with the prevailing climate of opinion.

By contrast, on the eve of World War II, Roosevelt, who was familiar with the metageography of continentalism, chose to adapt it to the dramatic changes underway in the world arena and eventually juggled his way between the assumptions of continentalism and the challenges of another world conflict. The resilience of hemispherism in his mental map was the consequence of deep personal convictions as well as his recognition of continentalism’s influence on the American public. In fact, Roosevelt was aware that, after the demise of Wilsonian internationalism, the 1920s had witnessed a resurgence of Monroeism in the domestic discourse of American foreign policy. In the Senate, a significant indicator of the domestic dimension of US foreign policy, this resurgence provided the foundation for a bipartisan reaffirmation of American unilateralism. In 1923, the higher chamber, led by Henry Cabot Lodge, opposed US membership in the Permanent Court of High Justice established in The Hague one year earlier on the grounds that it implied “a relinquishment by the United States of its traditional attitude toward purely American questions.”<sup>12</sup> The Senate Foreign Relations Committee put forward the same argument again in 1928 against the Kellogg-Briand Pact on disarmament, which was hardly a threat to US freedom of action in foreign affairs. The fact that even the prospect of a toothless international agreement like the Kellogg-Briand Pact triggered flag-waving assertions of unilateral Monroeism suggest that the latter was a reflection of profound sentiments and widespread orientations pertaining to America’s self-image and its relation to the world.

Notions concerning space, that is, the separation of the US from Europe and its proximity to South America—the “myth” that Staley and others debunked—grounded this continentalist discourse in nature. An atlas published in the US in 1937 still defined North and South America as one single continent, and the following year Roosevelt himself referred to “the continent in which we live” as stretching “from Canada to Tierra del Fuego.”<sup>13</sup> This continentalist geography was conducive to continental determinism.

In the late 1930s, as Europe was on the verge of yet more bloodshed, the idea of the Americas as “the hemisphere of peace” was immensely popular in the US.<sup>14</sup>

## CONTINENTAL METAGEOGRAPHY AND GLOBAL WAR

Beneath this apparent consensus, however, the orthodoxy of continentalism was being appropriated by actors with conflicting agendas. On the one hand, a hemispheric network including historians Charles Beard and Samuel Flegg Bemis, Senator Burton Wheeler, and Charles Lindberg, among others, advocated nonintervention on the grounds of US self-sufficiency and security due to the combined resources and geographic position of the Americas. On the other hand, Roosevelt, together with influential State Department officials like Assistant Secretary Adolf Berle and Undersecretary Sumner Welles, adapted his continentalist assumptions to the challenges of World War II. In October 1940, genuinely worried by Axis propaganda and infiltration in the Americas, the president publicly articulated his view on hemispheric defense:

There are those in the Old World who persist in believing that here in this new hemisphere the Americas can be torn by the hatred and fear (which) have drenched the battle grounds of Europe for so many centuries . . . ‘Divide and Conquer!’ That has been the battle-cry of the totalitarian powers in their war against the democracies. It has succeeded on their continent of Europe for the moment. On our continents it will fail.<sup>15</sup>

As he contrasted events in Europe and the Americas, he made reference to the exceptionalist binary opposition between the New World and the Old—peace versus war, freedom versus tyranny, cooperation versus conflict, racial harmony versus racial hatred—which resonated with the meta-geography of continentalism.

In an address to the American Automobile Association one month later, Berle stressed how the construction of the Pan American highway then underway would facilitate travel, which “is always greatest in those countries which can be reached by automobile,” and strengthen ties among the American republics in the process. American tourists used to visiting the “shrines of history” in Europe “must now seek in this Hemisphere the broadening experiences which once they sought beyond the seas. It will be found, I know, that there is as much wealth of experience and wisdom to be found in the Americas as in Europe; different, but no less glorious.”<sup>16</sup>

Roosevelt, Berle, Welles, and others shared what John L. Harper has defined as a “Europhobic-hemispheric” outlook, which contrasted the selfishness of the declining European powers against the peaceful cooperation

among the democracies of the Western Hemisphere.<sup>17</sup> As embittered Wilsonians, they were impatient with those whose thinking centered around the Old World; at the same time, they were aware that isolation would not provide security and prosperity to America in the age of aviation and economic interdependence. Their rhetoric was not just meant to appease the Monroe Doctrine stalwarts in the Senate, although political expediency also played a role. Rather, their “creeping hemispherism” played on the ambiguity of the Monroe Doctrine emphasized by Walter LaFeber in “sealing off the hemisphere into a de facto US sphere while insuring that other parts of the world remained open.”<sup>18</sup>

Before Pearl Harbor, Roosevelt wrapped his prointervention thrust in the old mantle of continentalism as he extended the Western Hemisphere’s eastern border farther East toward Europe. He did so both publicly, by justifying the shipping of US troops to Greenland and Iceland in terms of hemispheric defense, and privately, by redrawing the hemisphere’s eastern boundary with a pencil on a map so as to include the Azores as well as Iceland and Greenland; he sent his sketch to Winston Churchill to show him how far American action could range under the constraints of hemispherism.<sup>19</sup>

Geography was crucial in the controversy over the place of neutral America vis-à-vis World War II: Where was the boundary between Europe and the Americas? The Western Hemisphere was now a contested notion. While Roosevelt extended it eastward to include the Atlantic islands, isolationists held on to the dogma of hemispheric self-sufficiency, and Atlantacists dismissed it as an old, irrelevant “myth.”

Pearl Harbor forced Americans to face the end of an era of free security and to start thinking globally. However, the metageography of continentalism continued to play a role in US foreign policy throughout the war, as shown by negotiations leading to the foundation of the United Nations. Many inside and outside the Roosevelt administration believed that continentalism was worth preserving in the postwar order and had to be acknowledged in the UN Charter in some way. At the same time, they were not ready to recognize regional blocs around Britain or the USSR. This was another demonstration of the tension between globalist and regionalist outlooks, between an allegedly postgeographic universalism and an American nationalism very much based on geography. Far from being the result of proto-cold war tensions imposed on the US, such tension expressed the built-in, long-term contradiction rooted in the ambiguity of Monroeism.

What emerges throughout the negotiations that led to Dumbarton Oaks and later to the San Francisco Conference is the recurrent US attempt to play the regionalist card in the pursuit of what Neil Smith defines as “nationalist internationalism.” The US tried to reconcile continentalism and globalism with respect to two crucial issues: UN membership, for which the US even swallowed the admission of Peron’s Argentina in order to put together a faithful bloc of “Monroe Doctrine nations,” and the attempt to

seek recognition of the Act of Chapultepec on inter-American defense as a regional exception to the otherwise globalized Articles 51 and 52 of the UN Charter. Once again, the US tried to have it both ways. In the words of Senator Vandenberg, the most politically influential member of the US delegation in San Francisco, “Our great concern is to find a rule which protects existing regional groups (like Pan-Am) without opening up the opportunity for regional balance of power groups.”<sup>20</sup>

## AMERICA AS ATLANTIC NATION

By the time the United Nations was founded in 1945, four years of total war waged on a global scale had profoundly transformed not only America’s place in the world but also the home front and the very self-image of the nation. As Colonel Herman Beukema had presciently argued in 1939 in a Council on Foreign Relations study group on hemispheric defense, “to defend America it is necessary first of all to define America.”<sup>21</sup> I argue that the rise of the notion of an Atlantic community as an alternative to the metageography of continentalism at once reflected and fueled this discussion regarding the redefinition of the nation. America, which had entered the war reluctantly as the leader of the Western Hemisphere, was the triumphant leader of the West at a time when clouds loomed over the horizon with regards to continuing the wartime alliance with the Soviet Union. The adoption of a Europe-first strategy to win a global war implied not only a transformation of transatlantic relations at the diplomatic, strategic, and economic levels but also a reconsideration of mental maps and metageographic assumptions. To the extent that the use of geography plays a role in the construction of a national identity, the rise of the idea of an Atlantic community marked a turning point in US history.

From 1940 onward, Roosevelt encouraged the American people to look beyond the Western Hemisphere as he adapted the protean legacy of the Monroe Doctrine to his prointervention agenda. In an address delivered in May 1940, he warned against “a false teaching of geography—the thought that a distance of several thousand miles from a war-torn Europe to a peaceful America gave to us some form of mystic immunity that could never be violated.”<sup>22</sup> Misleading teaching and transmission of geographic knowledge was also a target of Staley’s argument against continentalism. He asked his readers to look at a “globe” rather than at the deceiving maps based on the Mercator projection: “Illusions persist in the minds of all of us from the old book-school device of the flap maps which break the world into hemispheres that have no objective existence whatever in nature.”<sup>23</sup>

A major contributor to this national conversation about geography and America’s place in the early 1940s was the influential public intellectual and foreign-policy commentator Walter Lippmann. He had developed a profound interest in geographic matters after working on the settlement

of post–World War I border issues with Isaiah Bowman. In a June 1940 article for *Life*, he made his case for US intervention by tearing down the hemispheric-isolationist assumption that geography had guaranteed American security and would continue to do so. Peace, he argued, had not been secured by the natural barriers provided by the oceans. The Monroe Doctrine had been effective because “though not an alliance with Great Britain, [it] was a joint parallel policy” based on Anglo-American “common interest.” World War II was now confirming that the two shores of the Atlantic were inextricably bound together:

It is manifest that in seeking to separate ourselves from the great wars of Europe, we cannot rely upon the Atlantic Ocean. It has never been a barrier to involvement in wars. Our geography books are as misleading as our history books. They show us maps of the Western Hemisphere in which North and South America lie isolated between two oceans that are as wide as the map itself. Because the maps do not show the land and the harbors on the other side of these two oceans, our people have been miseducated to think that oceans are an impregnable barrier. Oceans are not a barrier. They are a highway.<sup>24</sup>

Lippmann was arguably the most influential advocate of the idea of an Atlantic community, which was meant to frame the US as the leader of a transatlantic space that included North America and Western Europe and shared political and economic principles and institutions (liberal democracy, individual rights and the rule of law, free market and free trade); cultural traditions (Christianity and the legacy of Western civilization); and, consequently, national interests. As Ronald Steel shows in this volume, Lippmann’s discussion of geography in countless columns, not to mention books and private letters, was crucial to the construction of the Atlantic community.

As a metageographical notion, the Atlantic community can be seen as just another episode in the fluctuation of the border separating the West from the rest. For centuries, the East versus West opposition had provided a spatial configuration that reproduced a fundamental conflict over values: Christianity versus Islam, and later, reason and progress versus despotism and stagnation. What was new in the 1940s construction of the Atlantic community vis-à-vis previous configurations of the West was the crucial role played by the US. As the *primus inter pares*, the US had the power to articulate a hegemonic narrative based on the powerful ideological construct of the West.<sup>25</sup>

Such a construction, which is often dismissed as a by-product of the cold war, is actually rooted in the Anglo-American rapprochement of the early twentieth century and was precipitated by World War II. It fully displayed its hegemonic power as the media, especially the middlebrow press, popularized the notion of an Atlantic community being forged by commentators,



scholars, businessmen, and policy makers. The case of Henry Luce, the Time Inc. media mogul and influential advocate of intervention with close ties to the foreign-policy establishment, is a telling example of the workings of this ideological construction.

In July 1941, *Foreign Affairs* carried an article by Rhodes scholar Francis Pickens Miller—the organizational director of the Council on Foreign Relations and later an agent of the Office of Strategic Services and a State Department official—calling for the rejection of hemispherism and a new approach centered on the control of the “Atlantic area.” Geography was essential to his argument: “A glance at the map will show the location of control points in this area . . . the controlling forces must be in possession of Greenland, Iceland, the British Isles, Gibraltar, the Azores, Cape Verde Islands, and either Dakar or some nearby point on the West Coast of Africa . . . Most important of them all, of course, are the British Isles.”

It is safe to assume this outlook reflected that of Roosevelt, who was fascinated with geography, considered the Atlantic basin as crucial for the final outcome of the war, and strongly believed in the strategic importance of islands. Unlike Roosevelt, however, Miller charged the geographic and strategic notion of an Atlantic community with the cultural and historical implications of the notion of Western civilization:

The North Atlantic area is the cradle of our civilization, and the survival of the American way of life depends upon the survival of this civilization. For more than a thousand years our fathers have been building a common society around the shores of the North Atlantic. They built it by labor, by faith, and, when necessary, by arms. It is a civilization based upon a belief in the essential dignity of man, as expressed through representative government, limited by a Bill of Rights. The Atlantic Ocean has become the ocean of freedom.<sup>26</sup>

Finally, a map provided by the American Geographical Society complemented Miller’s article by visualizing this Atlantic space. The Editor’s Note informed readers that it was different from the “more familiar” maps based on the classic Equator-based Mercator map. The emphasis on the North Pole illustrated the proximity between North America and Eurasia, and the correction of the Mercator projection emphasized the physical proximity between the two shores of the Atlantic.<sup>27</sup>

The discussion of the “Atlantic area” as pivotal to American security was part of a wider discussion about the Atlantic world as crucial to American identity. If every nation is to some extent an “imagined community,” then the US is the quintessential imagined community, that is, a nation whose identity heavily depends on practices of cultural representation. In the 1940s, the printed media were major producers of such practices. As Wendy Kozol points out in her study of popular magazines as a vehicle of patriotism in postwar America, “visual media have even greater capacities



to visualize social norms and ideals that form national identities . . . They construct an imagined community of the ‘free’ and ‘Western’ world.”<sup>28</sup> In fact, the press did much to undermine the old continentalist metageography and to construct America as an Atlantic nation, with cartography, geopolitics, and geography also playing a major role in this effort.

After war broke out in Europe, the debate in the foreign-policy establishment was paralleled by an unprecedented circulation of and popular interest in maps: Americans had entered a new era of cartographic craze. Map sales skyrocketed. Rand McNally, the major American publisher of maps, atlases, and globes, sold more atlases and maps of Europe in the first two weeks of the war in September 1939 than it had from 1918 until then. Hammond, another important publisher, sold 300,000 maps of Europe during the same period. The Pearl Harbor attack naturally had similar effects on the sales of maps of the Pacific.<sup>29</sup>

These traditional maps by specialized publishers were challenged by a massive flood of journalistic cartography in newspapers and magazines, which experimented with perspective, color, and projections to offer their readers an easily understandable, visual description of the war. They deliberately sought to distance themselves from the aura of objectivity of academic and official cartography. “I try to dramatize the news of the week, not just produce a reference map like those in an atlas,” said a map maker for Time Inc.<sup>30</sup> While such dramatization responded to the publishers’ need to captivate readers and the advertisers’ need for simplification, it also allowed magazines to convey specific visions of the United States’ place in the world war and to shape a new metageography among the American public. Map makers for newspapers and magazines joined in exposing how the traditional Mercator projection was inadequate to describe what Alan Henrikson defined as “air-age globalism.” “Maps are Liars” was the title of a *New York Times Magazine* feature article in October 1942. Maps based on polar projections now illustrated how the Arctic area, Greenland, and Iceland provided a North Atlantic bridge between America and Europe. In September 1940, *Fortune*, a Time Inc. magazine catering to the business community, published a map featuring the “Strategic Frontiers of the US” that outlined “the invisible ring of the strategic frontier” as including the Arctic in the north, Greenland, Iceland and Western Europe to the East, and West Africa to the Southeast.<sup>31</sup>

Of course, cartography continued to be selective rather than objective, since it now reflected the primacy of the Atlantic/European theater of war. Maps of China, India, and Australia produced by Rand McNally during the war years utilized a scale of 1 inch to 252 miles, while maps of Britain, France, and Germany were much more detailed with their scale of 1 inch to 63 miles. Rand McNally’s *Cosmopolitan Atlas* devoted about 50 percent of its maps to the US, 13 percent to Europe, only 7 percent to Asia and Latin America, and 4 percent to Africa and Oceania. At times, maps for the general public appealed to familiar historical narratives. A National Geographic Society map issued in September 1941, for instance, showed

the places and dates of German submarine seizures together with the voyages of seventeenth-century explorers across the Atlantic.<sup>32</sup>

Popular geography, like cartography, helped locate the US in the Atlantic basin as a fact of nature. Throughout the war years, newspapers and magazines—especially Henry Luce’s *Time*, *Life*, and *Fortune*—were active in portraying Britain as close to the US in terms of space as well as culture; so-called family ties between the “English-speaking democracies” were emphasized by means of family metaphors that in previous decades had mostly designated, usually with patronizing overtones, the relations between the US and the “sister republics” of Latin America. Before and after Pearl Harbor, the historical analogy of Britain acting as Greeks to America’s Romans often came with a geographic twist: the Atlantic was the modern Mediterranean. In the aftermath of the liberation of Rome in June 1944, a *Life* article played on these parallels, only to conclude that after the war, “the ‘Atlantic Community’ may be similarly united under the sway of Great Britain and the U.S., which are at least as akin as Greece and Rome.”<sup>33</sup> In fact, Walter Lippmann had contributed to this specific remapping of American geography and history in one of his *Life* articles from 1939, when he wrote: “What Rome was to the ancient world, what Great Britain has been to the modern world, America is to be to the world of tomorrow . . . the geographic and the economic and the political center of the Occident.”<sup>34</sup>

The construction of a sense of geographical and historical proximity to nations across the Atlantic involved continental Europe as well. In May 1940, as France was about to fall under German control, a *Life* photo-essay offered a view of different French landscapes and stressed that in the Alpine region, “the stupendous ice masses flow into the golden valleys of the Riviera and make a land surprisingly like the coast of California”; while along the Atlantic seaboard, “the ocean fogs roll across Brittany from the Atlantic, producing a land and a people much like Maine, where the language and cooking are harsh and Celtic.” A few months later, the focus was on Portugal, strategically located along the Atlantic rim and valued by Roosevelt as a key outpost for the control of the Atlantic. The first-page photo-essay ran a picture of a fishing village facing the ocean, which the caption described as “3,400 miles East of Atlantic City”; the text explained that “the war, cutting the lines of intercourse to Northern Europe, has made Portugal what geography intended—not a faraway corner of Europe but its front door.” Finally, amidst sketches of Portuguese history and everyday life, Antonio Salazar was emphatically described as “The dictator [who] has built the nation.”<sup>35</sup>

## GLOBALISM AND THE ATLANTIC COMMUNITY

The construction of the Atlantic community was crucial in the context of the campaign for US intervention, during which time the cultural and

historical implications of American aid to Britain fully came to light. However, its significance did not vanish with the end of American neutrality.

In December 1941, the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor forced American policy makers and the public alike to consider the war's global dimension, which somewhat counterbalanced the Atlantic theater's early primacy after the opening of the Pacific front. Globalism, which had emerged in the early twentieth century with the rise of the US as an economic world power, reemerged as a framework with which to understand the scope of the American mission against the challenge posed by the Axis powers worldwide. Its influence increased after the German invasion of the Soviet Union turned the Anglo-American partnership between the "English-speaking peoples" into a tripartite, East-West alliance. Finally, the encouraging progress of the war after 1943 led the US to focus on planning for the postwar years. The war came to be seen as a "second chance" to secure peace by building an international organization based on democratic principles, in addition to an open economic order based on free trade that would ensure prosperity. Free traders, business internationalists, and Wilsonian advocates of a "world government" gained influence in Cordell Hull's State Department, especially after the ousting of Welles.<sup>36</sup>

This moment was captured by the stunning success of *One World* (1943) by former Republican presidential candidate and Luce's protégé Wendell Willkie. His bestselling account of a highly publicized world tour including China and the Soviet Union was a plea for an inspirational internationalism crossing national and racial barriers and unifying "the people of the earth in the human quest for freedom and justice," and it popularized a sort of post-Wilsonian, feel-good universalism. Willkie's world was characteristically postgeographical. Flying from the US to the Caribbean, then on to Brazil, West Africa, Egypt, the Middle East, Russia, China, and finally over the Bering Strait back to the US led him to appreciate how the "air age" was increasing interdependence among different areas of the world:

There are no distant points in the world any longer . . . continents and oceans are plainly only parts of a whole, seen, as I have seen them, from the air . . . And it is inescapable that there can be no peace for any part of the world unless the foundations of peace are made secure throughout all parts of the world.<sup>37</sup>

However, globalists in the State Department hardly monopolized the making of US foreign policy during wartime, and Willkie's "one worldism" was not unequipped to deal with the issues posed by the coming postwar order, namely, the creation of a world organization and relations with the Soviet Union. His *One World* was almost instantly countered by Lippmann's influential pamphlet *U.S. Foreign Policy: Shield of the Republic*, which fully articulated his rejection of Wilsonianism and his quest for an Atlantic outlook. In 1944, while American plans for the postwar order came under

the increasing scrutiny of public opinion during the presidential campaign, negotiations in preparation for the Dumbarton Oaks conference revealed the contradictions of the US “nationalist internationalism” discussed earlier. As Anglo-American troops landed in Normandy and the final stage of the war in Europe was underway, Lippmann went so far in his *U.S. War Aims* as to accept a future Soviet influence in Eastern Europe. The realism that informed his Atlantic regionalism was well received across the political spectrum by Herbert Hoover, the conservative who scorned Wilsonian liberal idealism, as well as by Reinhold Niebuhr, the liberal theologian who agreed that the Atlantic nations of North America and Europe were a “community” since they shared Christian values and democratic institutions. In this perspective, the West was a community, but there was no such thing as a “world community.” In fact, the globalization of the war did nothing to undermine the metageography of the Atlantic community. Rather, the approaching victory made it all the more instrumental for reshaping the American identity required by the future role of the US as the military, economic, and cultural leader of the West.

Locating the US at the core of Western civilization was quite a dramatic shift in historical as well as geographical terms, and it comes as no surprise that American historians were involved in the process. Carlton Hayes’s case for an Atlantic approach to American history, which Emiliano Alessandri discusses in this volume, was a significant step in the construction of an Atlantic community narrative that, as Peter Novick argues, came to be “the appropriate framework for both North American and Western European history” during the early years of the cold war.<sup>38</sup>

At the same time, the metageography of the Atlantic community responded to anxieties about the future since it could make sense of what many saw as the imminent confrontation between the West and the rest. Again, Luce’s picture magazine provides interesting evidence. In September 1944, *Life* carried an article by William Bullitt, the former US ambassador to the Soviet Union and an early critic of cooperation with Moscow. “The World from Rome” attacked the alleged softness of Roosevelt on Stalin and emphasized the role of the Catholic church as a bulwark against communism. Appealing to deep-seated fears about the barbarian Orient, Bullitt wrote that “Today, when the moral unity of the Western civilization has been shattered by the crimes of the Germans . . . Rome sees again approaching from the East a wave of conquerors.”<sup>39</sup>

In summary, the ideological appeal of the Atlantic metageography—its ability to present as natural what was in fact a political construct and to turn complex international issues into easily understandable terms—was manifold. First, it replaced the geographical and historical assumptions of continentalism with a new, consistent vision of the *place* of America, which was rooted in space and time. Second, it provided a rationale for internationalism to those who were unconvinced by the holistic outlook and visionary ambitions of Wilsonianism. Third, it made sense of the abrupt

transition from the wartime alliance with the Soviet Union to the cold war confrontation.

Finally, the Atlantic community framework recast the old tensions within American “internationalist nationalism” between space-based identity and spaceless ambition, regionalism and globalism, nationalism and universalism. Luce famously illustrated the rise of 1940s “internationalist nationalism” in his essay on the American century. His quest for the projection of American power had a distinct globalist and antigeographic tinge: “Are we going to fight for dear old Danzig or dear old Dong Dang? . . . Are we going to decide the boundaries of Uritania?”<sup>40</sup> It was a rhetorical question, of course. In his view, America’s potential global power was such that dealing with geography was no longer necessary. As Neil Smith argues, “the emerging American empire defined its power in the first place through the more abstract geography of the world market than through direct political control of territory.”<sup>41</sup> However, for all his exceptionalism, Luce also saw America as the leader, benefactor, prophet, and warrior of the West. “In addition to ideals and notions which are especially American,” he wrote in “The American Century,” “we are the inheritors of all the great principles of Western civilization.” This explains why, in the words of Nikhil Pal Singh, “despite the ostensible universalism of his global pronouncement any reader . . . would have understood Luce’s defense of the civilizing project of ‘the West’ as constituting a distinct political identity.”<sup>42</sup> Boundaries separating the West and the rest were implicit in his holistic view. A few years later, those boundaries would come to define the perimeter of the first peacetime alliance in American history.

## NOTES

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## Part II

# Transatlantic Crossings



## 5 Social Protection and the Promise of a Secure Future in Wartime Europe and America

*Maurizio Vaudagna*

Richard Titmuss, the leading and enthusiastic student of the British welfare state, concluded his noted research on social policy in World War II Britain by stating:

It would . . . be true to say that by the end of the Second World War the Government had . . . assumed and developed a measure of direct concern for the health and well-being of the population which, by contrast with the role of Government in the nineteen-thirties, was little short of remarkable.<sup>1</sup>

The place of social protection on the European home fronts was significant in terms of new measures to defend the civil population against the casualties, homelessness, and destruction caused by aerial bombing as well as plans to compensate for sacrifices borne by both civilians and the military. A famous article from the British *Times* in the wake of the rout at Dunkirk in May 1940 stressed that the war could not be won if the Allies did not show the peoples on both sides of the English Channel and throughout the world that they had something better to offer for the postwar future.<sup>2</sup> Between 1939 and late 1942, when the Axis seemed on the brink of victory, social-security plans acquired importance as competitive tools adopted by both sides to win continued popular support for the war effort. In the meantime, new public services had to be invented in haste as part of civilian defense measures for evacuations, homelessness, and emergency medical services during the 1940–1941 Battle of Britain and the Allied bombing campaigns of 1944–1945. Indeed, a population unified by a common trial now demanded that the state play a larger role in guaranteeing greater security and a better life, not only during but also after the war.

When war broke out in 1939, liberal countries, especially Britain and the United States, were not at an advantage when it came to social security matters. On the one hand, the Soviet Union claimed to have made social guarantees its distinguishing feature and had spared no occasion to criticize socially abstentionist liberals as insensitive to poverty and exploitation. A similar note had frequently been sounded by the Fascist powers whose

familist, natalist, and racist new social services and financial payments, together with the successful Nazi reemployment campaign, had made for a very impressive record only counterbalanced by the social creativity of the New Deal. The battle for the “hearts and souls” of the people, with its marked social accent, required liberal powers to develop the promise of a socially secure future that would withstand comparison with that of the enemy or even the Communist ally.

At this historical juncture, the social issue met with the principle of a “community” of liberal countries bordering the Atlantic, first and foremost Britain and the United States. Established during World War I and revived by American internationalists on the eve of World War II, the “Atlantic community” was understood as the United States, Britain, France, and any other liberal nations that shared public values, lifestyles, and strategic interests<sup>3</sup> and developed into a comprehensive, civilizational summary of the principles that Western Allies wanted to enact in the postwar world. First formulated as a political and international security issue to defend and expand “Western civilization,” on the eve of World War II the term “security” had also come to be vested with a social accent because of the Depression, the rise of the communist world, and the demands of the socialist parties, as well as Catholic and Protestant social movements. As a result, social security and social rights came to form an essential component of the wartime notion of the West, the Atlantic community, and democratic citizenship. They were also a conspicuous part of the basic statements made by the Allied forces and the international organizations in portraying the postwar world to come.

“The expansion of the state that accompanied war mobilization and economic shortages between 1939 and 1945,” said historian Jytte Klausen in a classic statement of the “warfare to welfare” historical interpretation, “was critical to the creation of the postwar welfare state. Wartime expansion of the state machinery for directing the economy assumed roughly similar forms in different countries and led to a wholly new conception of the possibilities inherent in economic policies.”<sup>4</sup>

In light of the “Keynes plus Beveridge” formula to describe the foundations of postwar public interventionism in the socioeconomic realm, it is difficult to equalize the universalist British/Scandinavian welfare state, the German “social market” economy, and the private and market-oriented “politics of growth” of the United States, where the very expression “welfare state” has never been really accepted. Neither did common social experiences during the war have the same outcome in different countries after the combat had ended. However, if “welfare state” is understood as a varied but distinguishable spectrum of economic and social policies that have characterized postwar democracies, then the continuity still stands; and the war was not only the precedent but also the foundation of what was to come.

Richard Overly has asked “why the Allies won.”<sup>5</sup> By early 1942, the lightning victories of the Nazis were so weighty that it was reasonable to

imagine Germany was about to win the war and that continental Europe would become a Nazi ocean.<sup>6</sup> The expansion had almost erased the historic German inferiority in people and resources vis-à-vis France and Great Britain joining hands against it with their vast empires, even with the United States and the Soviet Union joining in the fold.

On the other hand, after the Nazi-Soviet agreement of August 1939 and the fall of France in 1940, Britain had remained practically alone in its dogged resistance to the triumph of the Nazi superpower and was desperately searching for new actors, first and foremost the United States, to enter the conflict on its side. It was in this context of emergency that the vision of the Atlantic community took its first official steps. The long process that led the United States to side with Britain during the war was fostered by the awareness of Franklin D. Roosevelt and the internationalists that a world led by the victories and expansion of the Fascist dictatorships would be incompatible with American interests and ideals. Moving the US to the side of the “Brits” was anything but easy, since the world vision of isolationists, agrarian insurgents, and Western nationalists—the core of the opposition to US involvement in the war—was permeated with anti-British sentiments. However, from the moment the two nations began slowly moving closer together in 1939, their encounter was projected as both a matter of converging national interests and the meeting of liberal, sister—or at least cousin—nations, with largely similar languages, histories, civilizations, and lifestyles that indicated the way for all freedom-loving peoples.

The first fundamental statement of the notion of an Atlantic community consequently appeared in the Atlantic Charter, the joint declaration of the Roosevelt-Churchill meeting at Placentia Bay that was made public on 14 August 1941. The two leaders “deemed it right to make known certain common principles in the national policies of their respective countries on which they base their hopes for a better future for the world.” The statement spoke of the “final destruction of the Nazi tyranny,” which was a danger to “world civilization” with its policy of military domination, and a commitment to “respect the right of all peoples to choose the form of government under which they will live.”<sup>7</sup> According to Timothy Garton Ash,

When Winston Churchill and Franklin Roosevelt met aboard the battleship off the coast of Newfoundland in August 1941 singing ‘Onward Christian Soldiers’ with their massed British and American cruises, they made one of the great symbolic bondings of the twentieth-century West.<sup>8</sup>

In terms of social policy, the 1940/1941 armed confrontation between Germany and Britain coincided with that of the two nations that had afforded the two main “models” of social protection during the preceding sixty years. Historical sociologists Peter Flora and Arnold J. Heidenheimer hold that Germany acted as “the innovator” in welfare-state history. In 1881,

the German emperor had announced in his social message the program of compulsory state insurance that Chancellor von Bismarck had then enacted in the 1880s. It was the first systematic plan of social protection in modern times and was then studied and copied by European and non-European countries.<sup>9</sup> The German social program was clearly aimed at strengthening the popular support of the authoritarian “social monarchy” and containing democratic and socialist demands, since it coincided with the legislation outlawing the Social Democratic and Center parties in German public life. Having ascended to become a central feature of the domestic and international self-image of the German monarchy, the social program explicitly contrasted with democratic, socialist, and liberal principles. At the St. Louis World Fair of 1904, the exhibit on social insurance organized by the German Ministry of the Interior maintained that a wider expansion of social legislation depended on the contrast between monarchical and electoral government:

Imitation would doubtless have been even more widespread had not initiatives in various states been retarded by prevailing social political ideas and . . . by far-reaching concessions to the attitudes of the voting masses. What this illustrates are the advantages of monarchical government, which provides the strength of the resolute implementation of necessary social reforms despite the opposite powers of political shortsightedness, heartless insensitivity, sluggish routine or economic recklessness.<sup>10</sup>

The merging of social protection and political authoritarianism in what twentieth-century, free-market, individualist liberals would ceaselessly criticize as sociopolitical “paternalism” emerged as the modern system of social protection’s mark of origin.

The first important liberal “response” to German-style social relief was the so-called Lib-Lab program of pensions and national insurance enacted by the British governments of Herbert H. Asquith and David Lloyd George between 1908 and 1911. One of the new aspects of the Lib-Lab social policy was that, unlike both Bismarckian compulsory statism and the traditional British Poor Laws that matched public relief of the needy with the curtailing of their civil liberties, pensions were mostly financed by general tax revenues. The policy was therefore a forerunner of universalistic welfare, with the management of health insurance assigned not to the state but to a series of “approved” private associations such as insurance companies, friendly societies, cooperatives, and trade unions.<sup>11</sup>

In spite of numerous other countries having inaugurated protective legislation, Germany and Britain became the beginning and the end of what Flora and Jens Alber have called the “first phase” in the history of modern welfare, from Bismarck to 1914.<sup>12</sup> Their social policies—which were statist and/or individualist, public and/or private, compulsory and/or voluntary,

contributory and/or tax funded, centralized and/or diffused, generous and/or restricted arrangements—identified the possible avenues of modern social protection.

The war between Germany and Britain was therefore also a confrontation between the Bismarckian tradition of authoritarian social relief and its more recent liberal version. However, when Flora and Heidenheimer contrast Germany, “the innovator” to Britain, the less-original “adapter,”<sup>13</sup> they seem to agree that, well into World War II, authoritarian orders took the initiative in social policy much more than their liberal counterparts. Lenin’s *Declaration of Rights of the Working and Exploited People*, which was approved by the Third All-Russia Congress of Soviets in January 1918 and later that year became the basis for the Soviet Constitution, placed the social issue at the center of the new proletarian nation. Nazism claimed that it was surpassing liberalism and communism, free-market and class struggle, in favor of a racially based nationalist order that included an “Aryan welfare state” in which the government would guarantee jobs and social services to “real Germans.” It was a vision of “welfare for the strong” that was to run counter to “the welfare for the weak” allegedly expounded by the Democratic and Socialist International Labor Office, which Nazi Germany had abandoned in 1934, as well as by the former and vituperated Weimar Republic, whose *Wohlfahrtsstaat* prime minister Von Papen had criticized as the source of the German people’s “moral exhaustion.”<sup>14</sup>

Despite important expansions of existing measures, the liberal and Socialist response to the totalitarian initiatives was rather weak during the interwar years. The Weimar Republic embarked on a comprehensive program of “social rights,” a notion that, partly in response to Lenin’s statement, was first given official resonance in the republic’s 1919 constitution. However, the embattled terrain of social policy was one of the main reasons for its failure. Scandinavian Social Democrats had moved forward brilliantly in their steps to match universalist social measures with democratic citizenship, but their countries were not central enough on the international stage to afford an efficient alternative. Voices from dictatorial countries criticized the insensitivity, exploitation, and poverty of liberal capitalism and its alleged abstentionism when it came to social issues, amplified in the 1930s by the sufferings of the Great Depression. The notion of a dictatorial leadership in socioeconomic matters was so widespread that in the United States, the *New York Times* editors thought only “totalitarian” economic management could “bring full employment into being.”<sup>15</sup> On the eve of World War II, most liberal countries were at a disadvantage as “latecomers” in social protection, a terrain that had grown increasingly important and was to be further emphasized by the sacrifices the population was asked to bear during the war years.

The process by which World War II and the late 1940s represented the eventual marriage of the welfare state and liberal democracy runs throughout the Allied statements during the war and is already to be detected in

the Atlantic Charter. Indeed, point 5 promises “to bring about the fullest collaboration between all nations in the economic field with the object of securing, for all, improved labor standards, economic advancement and social security.” In the language of Roosevelt’s “Four Freedoms” address given just a few months earlier, lasting peace “will afford assurance that all the men in all the lands may live out their lives in freedom from fear and want.”<sup>16</sup>

Churchill took the principles of the Atlantic Charter rather lightly and was willing to let Americans enjoy ample leeway with regards to ideals and rhetoric in exchange for the US moving closer to Britain on military matters. Contemporary and historical interpretations have therefore seen the Atlantic Charter as a step in the shift from British to American leadership of the Western world, as well as a sign of the New Deal’s internationalization as the intellectual and programmatic foundation for the Atlantic community.

The charter’s language and vision of social protection and economic welfare were somewhat paradoxical. Even though Britain had been a leading actor in the twentieth-century history of social policy, a Wilsonian and New Deal frame of mind still characterized the charter’s socioeconomic statements. Consequently, the starting point in the framing of an Atlantic perspective in social welfare is Roosevelt’s “Four Freedom” address of 6 January 1941, which expounded the fundamental principles of the “world of tomorrow.” It also set forth a “language of freedom” that would resurface in both the preamble of the UN’s Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 10 December 1948 and the founding statements of the Western Alliance. Roosevelt’s address was weightier and more popular than earlier statements by the Allies, which had dealt with social and economic issues in a wording so close to that of the American president as to suggest a sort of supranational “language of social rights” circulating among liberal countries. This was the case of the British “Draft Statement on War Aims” of 13 December 1940, which stressed that Britain was fighting for “social principles” against “Vandal Germany,” that is to say, “the right to live without fear, either of injustice or of want.”<sup>17</sup>

Roosevelt’s third freedom, “freedom from want,” renewed the American promise of abundance and an end to the poverty of the Depression. The fourth, “freedom from fear,” had acquired a complex set of references, as had the notion of “security.” It had sounded like a socioeconomic word in the famous line of Roosevelt’s First Inaugural, “the only thing to fear is fear itself,” referring to the lack of confidence in the return of prosperity and the self-fulfilling sense of economic despair.<sup>18</sup> But as the threat of war became more real, a new meaning came to superimpose itself upon the old one: the fear of enemy planes dropping bombs on the civilian population, as was happening in London. Eventually, the two shades of the word became interdependent: the parents in Norman Rockwell’s famous illustration of the fourth freedom could happily kiss goodnight to their son both because



no enemy was threatening from the sky and because their income allowed them to enjoy economic solidity. Military victory therefore coincided with the promise of postwar socioeconomic security.

The early framing of the social war aims of the Allies and the emerging Atlantic community did not happen in a vacuum. On the contrary, it was shaped by the dramatic situation of the war in 1940–1941: Britain was under aerial attack and envisioning a possible German land invasion, and Europe was in Nazi hands. In the wake of the rout at Dunkirk, a famous article in the conservative daily *Times* asking for social justice, the end of privilege, and a more equitable distribution of wealth became the centerpiece of the British newspaper campaign to strengthen the morale of the population and the armed forces with the promise of a more secure, just, and egalitarian future.<sup>19</sup>

However, the Nazis were unwilling to cede the terrain of social promises to the Allies: Germany had to convince both its own public to continue its support of the war effort and occupied Europe that Germany's war aims were, as the *Völkischer Beobachter* said on 30 July 1941, not “imperialistic but social.”<sup>20</sup> At their meeting in the Rastenburg forest on 25 August 1941, Hitler and Mussolini issued a communiqué “to give prominence to the conception of the New European Order,” as historian Arnold W. Vincent has stressed, “regarded by the Axis Powers as a reply to the Atlantic Charter.”<sup>21</sup> According to German historian Martin H. Geyer,

In 1940–1941, Germany was on the ideological offensive both at home and abroad . . . [this consisted of] the promises of a rapidly growing standard of living, of social welfare, and, in particular, of full employment not only in Germany but throughout the new *grosswirtschaftsraum* [greater economic sphere].<sup>22</sup>

In February 1940, Hitler ordered Robert Ley, the leader of the German Labor Front (DAF), to prepare a new plan of social security that resulted in the *Versorgungswerk des Deutschen Volkes* (a system of social provisions for the German people). This would come to encompass a new scheme for old age pensions, a new public health service, public housing, a public administration for recreation and leisure, a new pay-scale structure, and a new system of professional training.<sup>23</sup> In the end, the principle behind Ley's plan was to legislate a guaranteed minimum income for all “Germans,” including white-collar and self-employed workers, to be funded by general tax revenues. The “lower races,” including Jews in particular, but also “asocial” and “parasitical” individuals who did not obey the duty of all Germans to work and participate in the social bodies that structured the German *Volksgemeinschaft* (people's community) were excluded.<sup>24</sup> Ley's plan was to be a central piece of what Goering would call “the large-scale unification of Europe.”<sup>25</sup> The plan had a significant impact despite the fact that some of its framers were also in charge of deporting Jews or organizing

slave labor in occupied countries, and Ley was sometimes nicknamed “the German Beveridge.”

After the fall of France in July 1940, the Minister of Economics Walther Funk made an important address in which he developed the guidelines for the *Gross-Wirtschaftsraum* (greater economic space) in Nazi-occupied Europe. The social-protection plan was a significant component, and he cited the precedent of the 1930s as both a source of credibility and a sign of continuity since the Nazi government had been able to put Germans back to work in spite of the devastating Depression. The word “unemployment” would disappear, Funk said, “from the European economic vocabulary,”<sup>26</sup> and Germany would lead the “community of European nations” out of its economic strictures and toward prosperity. Liberal economics, which for many Nazi leaders was tantamount to theorizing British superiority over the rest of the world, was obsolete and would be replaced by its German-style, guided, politicized alternative.<sup>27</sup>

As Martin H. Geyer has stressed, “the outside world took the German unemployment propaganda offensive very seriously.”<sup>28</sup> At a meeting of high-ranking American government officials in early May 1941, the view was expressed that the coming US-British meeting off the coast of Newfoundland would issue “a statement of our alternative to Hitler’s New Order, a definition of the New Order of the Ages.”<sup>29</sup> Asked by the Ministry of Information to furnish material to counter the German proposals, economist John Maynard Keynes concluded somewhat ironically that “about three-quarters of the passage quoted from the German broadcasts would be quite excellent if the name of Great Britain were substituted for Germany or the Axis, as the case may be.” As he perceptively argued, the German objective was “to appeal to the wide circles and powerful interests in each country which are inclined in present circumstances to value social security higher than political independence.” Counterpropaganda had to appeal not to “revolutionary sentiment in Europe” but “to the craving for social and personal *security*.”<sup>30</sup>

Both sides seemed to indicate economic welfare and social security as the fundamental purposes of the war. If late 1942 represented the exhaustion of the German Army’s *Blitzkrieg* push forward and announced the turning of the tide, something similar happened in matters of social policy. Britain regained the upper hand thanks to the enormous impact and popularity of the so-called Beveridge Report of 1942. Resulting from a survey by the Inter-Departmental Committee on Social Insurance and Allied Services created on 10 June 1941 by the wartime national coalition government, the report was chaired by William Beveridge—a long-time liberal economist, former consultant for the National Insurance Act of 1911, and a public intellectual much admired by Laborites and Fabians alike. The committee had conducted the survey of the evils of “Want, Disease, Ignorance, Squalor and Idleness” in some of the largest British cities and had found the main national schemes of social insurance wanting.<sup>31</sup>

The report proposed a universal social insurance without means tests that would protect against interruption of earnings due to unemployment, illness, or old age and recommended family allowances and comprehensive health rehabilitation services. Benefits would be paid to people who were sick, unemployed, retired, or widowed. Beveridge argued that this system would provide a minimum standard of living “below which no one should be allowed to fall.” According to historian G. C. Piden, “The heart of the Beveridge Report was the proposed amalgamation of all existing state insurance and pension schemes into one which would provide subsistence benefits whenever an insured person’s earnings were interrupted.”<sup>32</sup>

Beveridge pressed for the report to be as comprehensive, visible, and vocal as possible. It was published as a government white paper in early December 1942 amid the objections of many conservatives, mainly because it was already universally popular. In the Parliament debate of February 1943, despite much opposition, the decision was made that the report would not be implemented immediately and was to be seen primarily as a blueprint for the postwar years. The report was extremely successful both in Britain and in America, representing a step forward in building the social aspect of the coming Atlantic community; and Beveridge did not fail to portray it as the expansion of the Atlantic Charter’s socioeconomic statements.

The Beveridge Report also signaled that the marriage between the welfare state and liberal democracy had reached maturity in terms of ideas and programs to be implemented after the war. It was the first time that a coherent liberal program of social universalism would put the liberal orders at an advantage vis-à-vis their authoritarian counterparts and move liberal democracy to the vanguard of social reform. The report was very careful to differentiate itself from the racist, statist, and dictatorial features of contemporary Nazi proposals. It stressed that liberal, social-security universalism would take place in the context of a free society, as related in the title of the book published by Beveridge in 1944, *Full Employment in a Free Society*, which foresaw the cooperation of the state and the individual and allowed plenty of room for voluntary action.<sup>33</sup> Indeed, the report became the parameter against which national or international wartime plans of social reform would be measured, whether approvingly or critically, as was mainly (though not always) the case in Fascist countries.<sup>34</sup> While Axis plans of social security had been on the offensive in the years between 1939 and 1942, by early 1943 it was time for the Germans to worry about the strength of the Allies’ message.

Seizing the leadership away from the Nazis was an amazing reversal. The historical precedent of the 1930s played in favor of the Axis when it came to both socioeconomics and international relations. In the 1930s, Germany had scored an appalling set of international victories from the reoccupation of the Ruhr down to the annexation of Czechoslovakia, which had all but exploded the international order of the Versailles Treaty. Moreover, the anti-Depression policies of the Nazi regime had been among the most

radical of the decade, putting Germans back to work and inaugurating new “aryan” social measures. As much as the reemployment policy of the 1930s seemed to lend credence to the socioeconomic plans of the “new Europe,” the Nazi victories between 1939 and 1941 seemed to continue the series of international successes that had run uninterrupted since Hitler’s rise to power in 1933. As a result, turning the tide of the war did not mean putting an end to the Nazi military victories of the previous three years or framing a promise of social security that would be more credible than contemporary Nazi plans. Instead, it meant not only interrupting an amazing series of international successes that had lasted for some ten years, but also lending credibility to a social promise against the traditional upper hand that political authoritarianism had enjoyed in social matters for decades, including the Fascist 1930s. The Beveridge Report represented a historical watershed against this long-term background that was as amazing as the Allied armies first containing and then defeating the Nazi offensive, which in the years between 1939 and 1942 had seemed it would win the war.

The continuities between the Depression decade and the war years notwithstanding, the foundations of the wartime promise to expand welfare was due to the novel conditions created by the military confrontation. As Jytte Klausen has stressed,

Nineteenth-century wars were fought by lining soldiers up along military frontlines . . . Men went off to war, and meanwhile life continued. But in the twentieth century, bombing exposed civilian populations directly to destruction and dislocation . . . The feeding and protection of civilians became a matter of concern for states on par with that of providing for soldiers.<sup>35</sup>

The war produced two consequences that favored the expansion of social-security policies in the postwar years. First, it created a sense of common sacrifices borne by the entire population and therefore widespread support for more encompassing, egalitarian welfare measures. Second, it compelled governments to inaugurate measures of civil defense in areas like food supply, homelessness, health care, evacuation, and hospitalization of war casualties, which acted as precedents and test-runs for the social services to come.

In Germany, Goebbels observed: “the bomb terror spares the dwellings of neither rich or poor.”<sup>36</sup> Searching for the roots of the solidarity that was essential for mobilizing the popular support needed to enact welfare policies, historian Peter Baldwin has noted that “war and disaster have helped undermine common certainties even among the self-reliant, prompting a greater appreciation of cooperative efforts to combat vacillation and risk.”<sup>37</sup> In turn, Richard Titmuss—who had developed an acute sense of social needs from having been burdened by economic dependence and family responsibility at a very early age<sup>38</sup>—insisted in his book *Problems of*

*Social Policy* (the official history of British social policy in World War II) that wartime national solidarity was the foundation of the postwar universalist welfare state in Britain and elsewhere.<sup>39</sup> Especially when Britain had been on the brink of military and human disaster under the threat of German bombs in 1940–1941, Titmuss believed that the common resistance had elevated the “natural” altruism of the family and the small community to a nationwide solidarity encompassing all people. Consequently, government emergency assistance and services had responded to the process of enlarging local and family altruism to include the entire nation, expressing the same type of solidarity and cohesion. As another leading theorist of the British welfare state T. H. Marshall stressed, its egalitarian thrust or its “equality minimum” had become part of the wartime social rights of citizenship, and universalism appeared as egalitarian generosity. When women protested the possibility that government payments for British women injured by German bombs would be lower than that of men, the government withdrew the proposal.<sup>40</sup>

Sometimes the consequences of the wartime drive toward universalism seemed paradoxical. Historically, welfare measures had grown because of “need,” especially the economic need of the poor who could not pay for private schools, houses, doctors, or hospitals, or could not support an elderly family member. Therefore, the goal of social relief had been mainly to contrast the event of “poverty” either as a stable condition or as a condition resulting from the interruption of earned income. However, the wartime universalist trend resulted in different cases in an effort to disengage social services from the notion of “need” and make them a right of citizenship independent of income, therefore mainly benefiting the better-off and the middle classes.

An interesting case in point is that of Sweden, a leading country in modern welfare services. In 1938, the social-democratic-inspired Social Welfare Committee had recommended universalist health insurance and pensions. However, during the war, Swedish conservatives proposed to change their opposition to welfare if services could be expanded to include the middle classes independent of a “means test” (which had traditionally been the archenemy of welfare progressives). The issue for conservatives was the support of the industrious, tax-paying middle classes, not just the badly off. As conservative leader Jarl Hjarlmarsson said, it was a “humane communism” for more than just the poor.<sup>41</sup> Need was no longer the foundation of entitlement, and services became a universal right of citizenship. At the SAP (the Swedish Social Democratic Party) congress of 1944, the projected universal pension created a clean split within the party since some of its leaders could not make peace with the notion of benefiting the rich. However, the climate of national unity created by the war, in spite of the special conditions of Swedish neutrality, managed to eventually mute the dissenting social democrats. Opinion polls showed that between 1945 and 1946, the Swedish public was very favorable to universalist pensions as an expression

of national cohesion. It was impossible to deny benefits to those who were paying steeply graduated taxes and were therefore funding the welfare system. In fact, when the new pension law, the *Folkpension* (people's pension), came before the Parliament in 1946, it was passed almost unanimously.

In Britain, the shock of seeing children evacuated in the years between 1939 and 1941 led the public to support food and clothing programs for the evacuees independent of family income, and the widespread approval for universal services, which meant expanding them to include the middle classes, was central to the Beveridge Report. As a result, the process of coalition-building that presided over universalistic welfare measures was the same in Britain and Sweden during the immediate postwar years.<sup>42</sup> According to Peter Baldwin, "the war had shown that all face the ultimate risks on an equal footing."<sup>43</sup> Universalism had also eventually disengaged the principle of social benefits from the tradition of charity, thereby giving rise to the "social citizenship state." For the exiled German social-democratic intellectual Eduard Heimann, the middle classes were strategic for the future of democracy. Their sense of economic insecurity and fear of proletarianization were what had led them to support the Nazis in Germany. A new alliance with the working class based on the common need for security was essential for fostering democracy and avoiding a Fascist comeback.<sup>44</sup>

The war also witnessed experimental emergency measures for social relief. Historian Robert G. Moeller has recalled the story of Frau F.'s life from prewar to postwar Germany. Her husband was drafted in 1939:

At first Frau F. and her children managed to survive his absence quite successfully. She found work as a postal carrier; her income, supplemented by the separation allowance paid to her as a military wife, allowed her to open a savings account and to indulge her children's food fantasies.<sup>45</sup>

Mother and childcare services helped Frau F. with her two small children. Frau F.'s story is like that of all German civilians in a nutshell. Between 1939 and 1941, Germany mobilized its economy to a very small extent. Civilian production was modified only minimally, and women were not mobilized at all. Since the German government, in contrast to the British, anticipated a short war, its *Blitzkrieg* was also a way to disrupt civilian life as little as possible and maintain the people's support.<sup>46</sup> In the area of public assistance, the system was reformed with the law of 21 October 1941, which increased benefits and established obligatory public quotas measured according to primary needs.<sup>47</sup> During the war, German old-age pensions were increased, rents were controlled, and separation payments to soldiers' wives amounted to 85 percent of the husband's previous earnings, more than double the percentage paid in Britain. A sort of licensed public-private cooperative social service consisted of German soldiers stationed in

occupied European countries who exchanged their reichmarks for devalued local currencies to buy and mail home underpriced food, shoes, clothing, spirits, various fabrics, and sometimes furniture and works of art, as historian Goetz Aly has shown in his controversial book *Plunder, Race War and the Nazi Welfare State*.<sup>48</sup> Occupied countries were subject to a pillage of gold reserves, public and private properties (especially those of the Jews), transportation equipment, and consumer goods under the rubric of a skyrocketing “occupation cost.” In the difficult early postwar years in Germany, it was sometimes heard among German housewives that “we had it better with Adolf.”<sup>49</sup>

Despite the fact that Goering had promised it would not and could not happen, Churchill and Roosevelt decided to systematically bomb German cities in January 1943. Prewar German civil defense plans were therefore strengthened and placed in the hands of the city mayor or the local Nazi gauleiter. Integrated citywide plans systematized all aspects of civil defense, including the building and managing of shelters and the evacuation of 2.5 million children to the countryside. However, civilian defense soon became useless: Allied aerial attacks killed almost half a million civilians in some 120 cities,<sup>50</sup> and Frau F.’s life changed dramatically: Her apartment house was destroyed; she lost her daughter; her son was evacuated; and she became a sort of vagrant, searching for accommodation not only in the homes of relatives and friends but also in bomb shelters or ruins. When her city, Darmstadt, was liberated, Frau F. was living in an abandoned basement, and her son Willy had become an expert in begging and stealing from Allied troops.

In Britain, over 43 million civilians had been killed by German bombing attacks by the end of May 1941, and more than a million homes had been destroyed or damaged in London alone. Evacuation, homelessness, illness, and injury began to aggravate public services and require new measures. As Richard Titmuss explained,

The central problems of this period . . . were largely concerned with reducing social distress and finding remedies for the general disorder of life under air bombardment. The effects of dropping explosive and incendiary bombs on the highly organized business of a great city . . . disturbed the lives of individual citizens in countless ways, and created for the Government a host of urgent social problems.<sup>51</sup>

Local authorities were under insistent pressure from the government to “invent” and deliver rescue services. Volunteer support was widespread among air-raid wardens and first aid parties, not to mention the Women’s Voluntary Services for Civil Defense, in which female volunteers did all kinds of jobs—everything from salvage and medical support to working in public kitchens and shelters to organizing child care and food drives. Innovations in social services often developed at the local, even individual, level.



Especially in the early stages of the German bombing campaign, charity organizations and volunteer social workers were unconcerned with the official regulation of former services and developed the types of support that started reforming services from below because of pressing need. However, as Titmuss showed, changes quickly moved up:

The period of improvised staffing did not last long. Within a few days of the first big raid, and after the chairman of the London County Council had complained bitterly that the post-raid services had been starved of money, the Minister, sweeping aside established practice, gave the Council a free hand. Accommodation in rest centres for homeless people was to be expanded from about 10,000 up to a limit of 50,000. Equipment, and paid or voluntary staff, were to be provided 'to such extent as might be necessary.' In effect, this ministerial decision threw the poor law out of the rest centres.<sup>52</sup>

Bomb victims could not be treated like recipients of prewar poor relief. Between May and August 1940, the Ministry of Health evacuated roughly 213,000 school-age children to safer areas.<sup>53</sup> Government schemes suddenly had to be redrawn as the German threat became more urgent with the fall of France and the possibility of an invasion. In addition, extensive organizational and social work had to be developed in the reception areas. As Titmuss commented with regards to the children evacuation program, "the introduction of social workers, the growth of hostel and residential nursery provision for children, and the development of the clothing scheme all illustrated the new accent on welfare."<sup>54</sup>

On Saturday, 7 September 1940, the *Luftwaffe* sent half its bombers to attack London, which was bombed for seventy-six nights in a row. Issues of relocation, shelters, homelessness, damage to roads, and public utilities were paramount. A government committee was appointed to deal with each of them, even if the urgency of sending food, water, and doctors or simply removing debris in heavily bombed areas was so pressing that no comprehensive approach could be developed. Air-raid distress funds appropriated by the government were insufficient. Many of the homeless were rehoused in schools or other public buildings under very poor food and living conditions.

Because of needs created by the war, the British hospital network was rather bifurcated. Several beds as well as services and medicines were reserved for war casualties, while the rest remained for the ordinary sick, an arrangement that made for difficult choices regarding who was to be given priority vis-à-vis scarce services. However, out of this difficult arrangement appeared the seeds of a national health service. As Titmuss said,

With the formation of the emergency hospital scheme, new areas of tension were added to those already in existence. In theory, at least, there

were now two hospital services in England and Wales superimposed on two hospital systems; one service for special wartime purposes and another for the ordinary sick. One was nationally directed and financed; the other was not. The same doctors and nurses worked sometimes in one, and sometimes in the other.<sup>55</sup>

While the Ministry of Health was to respect the private nature of British hospitals and tried hard to do so, the difficult decisions that had to be made regarding priorities and scarcity made the distinction between public and private increasingly difficult to maintain:

The Government's policy on the development of the emergency medical service during the war was increasingly influenced by the continuing story of civilian difficulties and deprivations. Again and again, the unyielding logic of these facts forced upon the Government decisions which, at an earlier date, it had been disinclined to consider.<sup>56</sup>

The growth in public services, workers, skills, and arrangements caused by the emergency of the war and developed by the government introduced many precedents and tools that would help establish the British welfare state of the postwar years.

After 1943, as the Allied forces began to envision a final victory, their competition with the Axis powers in terms of social plans came to an end. DAF leaders still stated that the social question could be the meeting point of Germans and Europeans in the context of the new *Neuordnung Europas* as late as 1944. However, Nazi propaganda now began to stress not the bright European future under Nazi rule but its doom in the grips of "Americanization," which looked at social problems as "issues of money and power."<sup>57</sup> In spite of the declining confrontation, social-security plans remained very important for the Allies since democratic "reciprocity patriotism" required the people's confidence that promises would be kept after the war, not to mention the not-so-hidden competition with Communist ideas. Western countries continued developing their projects of postwar social rights, which would conspicuously enter the constitutions of former Fascist countries like Italy and Germany. An important step in the internationalizing of social rights in a democratic, Western context was the Declaration of Philadelphia of the International Labor Office on 10 May 1944, in which article 22 stressed the right of every individual to social security.<sup>58</sup> Especially in Britain, the implementation of the Beveridge Report was announced by a series of measures, for instance, the increases in widow's and old-age pensions in 1942 and 1943. In 1944, the coalition government made a grandiose display of intentions, publishing two Social Insurance white books as well as a white book on National Health Services. While noncommittal on a number of controversial points, these were also supported by conservatives since it was

agreed that the public's expectation for the fulfillment of social promises definitely had to be taken into account.

At the same time, the public conversation was focused on peacetime continuities and changes in the economic and social measures of the war years. The claim of continuity with both the prewar and the coming postwar years had loomed large in Nazi discourse and propaganda. As Funk had stressed in his noted address of 21 June 1940 on the future of Europe, Germany had moved quickly to a "guided economy" by merging economic and military security in terms of jobs and rearmament. Early preparedness had therefore made the impact of the war on the country's economy and everyday life lighter than in liberal countries, with the same principle guiding Germany into the postwar years. The United States and Britain, on the other hand, would pay dearly for their obsolete laissez-faire dogmas, which soon compelled them to dismantle whatever economic leadership had been set in place during the war.

However, there was no Fascist monopoly on issues of continuity. The 1944 *Full Employment and Financial Policy* document of the British Labour Party's National Executive Committee stressed that a series of wartime controls were to be kept because of the benefits they had brought to the people. Even in the United States, Walther Reuther, the president of the United Automobile Workers union, wanted the War Production Board to become a Peace Production Board; and Philip Murray, the president of the Congress of Industrial Organizations, proposed a "Labor-Management Charter" following the precedent of wartime planning.

Roosevelt had been moving along these same lines. In the very press conference in which he pronounced the famous line about Dr. Win-the-War replacing Dr. New Deal, he made it clear that it was a transitory phase and added: "When victory comes, the program of the past of course has to be carried on." War offered a chance to internationalize the New Deal. Indeed, earlier the president had said: "If war does come, we will make it a New Deal war," which was understood as "worldwide collaboration with the object of security, for all; of improved labor standards, economic adjustment and social security." The New Deal was to lead the world.<sup>59</sup>

When Beveridge toured the United States in March 1943, his great popularity created some embarrassment in the government, which felt marginalized by the acclaimed Briton. Roosevelt even said privately that the Beveridge Plan should have been called the "Roosevelt Plan." Much to the president's delight, the press often defined the set of recommendations on security and public works from the National Resources Planning Board sent by the president to Congress in March 1943 as an "American Beveridge Plan."<sup>60</sup>

Alongside steps being taken for social rights in Britain, the real reinstatement of Dr. New Deal was Roosevelt's proposal for a Second Bill of Rights in his State of the Union Address on 11 January 1944. In it, he proclaimed "everybody's right to make a comfortable living" and stressed

“protection from the economic fears of old age, sickness, accident and unemployment,”<sup>61</sup> together with decent housing and free education. As legal scholar Cass R. Sunstein has pointed out, the proposition represented the fusion of New Deal thought and the American experience in World War II, since the Fascist threat had broadened the New Deal commitment to security and “strengthened the nation’s appreciation of human vulnerability.” Security was “not only—as the president said—physical security which provides safety from attacks by aggressors . . . but also economic security, social security, moral security.”<sup>62</sup>

Yet formidable political and economic forces were at work, moving the United States away from this trajectory and the outcome of World War II in British or Swedish social rights. After 1938, Republicans had an electoral comeback in Congress and sealed a powerful, conditioning alliance with conservative and southern Democrats. As Sen. Robert Taft put it in 1942, they wanted neither any “war socialism” nor any effort “to make the country over under the cover of the war.”<sup>63</sup>

Economic conditions were dramatically different too. After its initial popularity, the Beveridge Plan started losing ground in the United States because of its prevalent concern for scarcity, minimums, and subsistence. The reason was that Europe was terribly poor, busy finding ways to survive, and besieged by shortages and rationing that lasted many years after the war. America had undergone economic expansion during the war and was at that point the country where half the world’s production took place. Businessmen disgraced during the Depression had enjoyed a massive comeback in wartime government agencies. Growth, not subsistence, was the American agenda. As prominent New Dealer Harry Hopkins said, “social-security programs, desirable as they are, constitute a minor part of the total stream of purchasing power required to sustain a high level of production and employment.”<sup>64</sup> The relatively close socioeconomic conditions that had founded the common attitude toward issues of social protection during the war had disappeared. In 1943, the National Resources Planning Board was abolished. More importantly, Roosevelt’s Economic Bill of Rights foundered in Congress and only resulted in the much more limited 1944 GI Bill to compensate veterans.

On 5 July 1945 a shocking, landslide election saw the defeat of Winston Churchill, the leader of the British resistance and victory, in favor of Clement Attlee and his triumphant Labour Party, which in the next few years implemented the Beveridge Plan and built the British welfare state. This was an indicator of how seriously the promise of a more secure future had been received by the British public, as well as the fact that the Labour Party was more credible as the agent to actualize what official historians of the war have called “an implied contract between Government and the people.”<sup>65</sup>

The result of the British elections contributed to the sense that post-war Europe was moving left. Foreign Office official Oliver Harvey said,

“Unless it is to be communist, it must at least be Beveridge.”<sup>66</sup> But the situation differed politically and socially depending on the country. In Germany, memories of Nazi universalism and authoritarian “Beveridgism” caused the more market-oriented “social market economy” to prevail. In the United States, the “politics of growth” triumphed. To be sure, the war created the conditions for each democratic country to adopt some kind of the “Keynes plus Beveridge” formula after the war, with the governments dealing with the business cycle and affording social protection. However, the many versions adopted in Europe and America made the different paths as significant as their common features. In the end, it was the American “politics of growth” more than the emphasis on European social security that grounded the development of the Atlantic community in the 1940s and 1950s, thereby contributing to the supremacy of the “first pillar,” the United States, over the transatlantic Old World.

## NOTES

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## 6 What Winning Stories Teach

### The Marshall Plan and Atlanticism as Enduring Narratives\*

*David W. Ellwood*

#### INTRODUCTION

So now we know: It was “soft power” that won the cold war. Harvard professor Joseph Nye’s formulation, which dates back to 1990, has made his fortune. In 2009 Google.com listed more than 16 million references to the notion, and no week passes without some new discussion of its relevance for the modern world, especially today with the America (“hard power”) versus Europe (“soft power”) confrontation.<sup>1</sup>

In the book that sums up his thoughts on “soft power,” Nye explains that competitions over interpretations, credibility, and persuasion are crucial in the information age: “The world of traditional power politics is typically about whose military or economy wins. Politics in an information age may ultimately be about whose story wins.”<sup>2</sup> Nye’s argument is weakened, however, by his presentation of specific conflicts and outcomes. In this view, some of the most hard-fought wars of recent years all turn out to be little more than propaganda battles: over the Serbia of Milosevic, the al-Qaeda of the Osama cave videos, the Saddam Hussein of the weapons of mass destruction.

But the notion of the winning or hegemonic *story* has more potency than professor Nye’s formulations would have us believe. In an interesting new book from Paris, the Asia specialist Karoline Postel-Vinay launches—or relaunches—the notion of the “geopolitical narrative” and asks us to reflect on the past and present of the West by way of the history of some its dominant narratives. From the land that invented the idea of the connection between power and discourse—and then ran away with it over the metaphysical horizon—comes an analysis that shows how worldviews become narratives, how narratives rise to dominance, and how conflicts between ideologies, great powers, and regions of the world can in part be understood nowadays in terms of *les grands récits géopolitiques*.<sup>3</sup>

American geopolitical narratives of course have a central role to play in the Postel-Vinay view. From Manifest Destiny onward—a classical geopolitical narrative—has come a steady stream of inventions in the world of *grands récits géopolitiques*, which have often forced the rest to compete

or be left out: the Open Door, the Fourteen Points, the Good Neighbour policy, the Atlantic Charter and the United Nations, the cold war—a metaphor reinvented by a journalist, Walter Lippmann, which gave the US a monopoly on definitions of the biggest conflict of the age—the European Recovery Program (turned into the Marshall Plan by the press for rhetorical reasons), and finally in this sequence the Atlantic community, another Lippmann reinvention.<sup>4</sup> The Truman Doctrine, by way of contrast, was presented rhetorically so as to give a universal cast and legitimacy—in the eyes of domestic opinion—to a new kind of intervention with a very specific and rather narrow geopolitical focus: short-term aid to besieged democracies in Greece and Turkey.<sup>5</sup>

Postel-Vinay implies that the US has a special, indeed distinctive, inclination to turn its policies and worldviews into geopolitical narratives. This is not just “spin” (a rhetorical technique meant to amplify the persuasive power of some choice or line). Nor is it a media-led practice in the democratic marketplace. Nor is it just didactic/explanatory, i.e., led by the information needs of a domestic audience remote from the trouble spots of the world. The development in early 1990s American debates of a notion such as “globalization” shows that, better than any other in the twentieth century, American power has understood *the need to conjugate reality and its representation*, if a geopolitical narrative is to achieve its maximum “veracity effect,” to structure visions most successfully, to exert its most effective authority on behalf of the state.<sup>6</sup> George W. Bush’s post-September 11 denunciation of the “axis of evil” is, from this point of view, the latest production in a very long line, a traditional American method for democratizing, and hopefully popularizing, a foreign policy through the use of language.<sup>7</sup>

The point of this essay is to compare two specific geopolitical narratives from the early cold war—the Marshall Plan and Atlanticism—to see some of the different ways geopolitical narratives were constructed in the West in the post-World War II era. The analysis will also try to show how the *reinvention* of America’s capacity to project its power in those years also involved a constant experimentation with communication strategies and hence explicit and implicit narratives. So, the old medium-and-message conundrum once more? Not exactly, since the intertwining of political, economic, and narrative impulses in the efforts of representation of these two great geopolitical narratives was always much more complicated than that little epigram would suggest (though it is not to be forgotten or abandoned).

## THE EUROPEAN RECOVERY PROGRAM (ERP)

From the very beginning, the Marshall Planners were aware that to tackle the obstacles to understanding their efforts were likely to encounter, they would have to go over the heads of the local governing classes and speak directly to the people. Navigating by sight, the teams of journalists and film

people who launched the ERP “Information Program” turned it, by the end of 1949, into the largest single propaganda operation directed by one country to a group of others ever seen in peacetime. A January 1950 report by Mike Berding, the ERP information director in Rome, instructed:

Carry the message of the Marshall Plan to the people. Carry it to them directly—it won’t permeate down. And give it to them so that they can understand it.

No idea seemed too large or daring for the Information Program in its heyday. As long as they were directed at workers, managers, or employers, the key concepts everywhere were greater production and productivity, scientific management, and a single-market Europe. In each country there were specialized publications on these subjects, joint committees, trips by European leaders to inspect American factories, conferences, and eventually, in some places, even “productivity villages” where model factories and workers’ communities could be seen in action. For other groups in society—state employees, teachers, families, even schoolchildren—the promises of the American information campaign were more jobs, higher living standards, and ultimately peace in a Europe without rivalries. The Information Program eventually produced tens of documentary films, hundreds of radio programs, thousands of copies of its pamphlets, and it attracted millions of spectators for its mobile exhibitions.<sup>8</sup>

Posters, models, illuminated displays, audio messages, and films presented the Marshall Plan as graphically as possible, for every level of understanding. A booklet from a display at the Venice exhibit during the summer of 1949 opens with a dramatic quantification of the aid arriving at that time: three ships a day, \$1,000 a minute, two weeks’ salary from every American worker. The goals and the methods of the program were explained in everyday language and detailed how work had been restored to lifeless industries, how new machinery had modernized factories, and how greater output needed to be integrated Europe-wide to facilitate emigration and stabilize economic life on a continental scale. The concluding messages stated:

ERP is a unique chance offered to European nations towards reconstructing their economies, raising the standard of living among the masses, and attaining by the year 1952 an economic stability which is the foundation of political independence . . . Every worker, every citizen, is bound up in this rebirth. The future and the peace of Italy and of Europe, the general well-being of all, depend on the will and the work of each single one of us.<sup>9</sup>

The challenge for Marshall Plan communicators was not just to raise production but to raise productivity, not just to bail out bankrupt governments

but to modernize the state, not just to encourage international cooperation but to push for the integrated European market, not simply to save ailing industries but to change the war between reactionary capitalists and revolutionary workers into a dynamic relationship between enlightened producers and contented consumers. America triumphantly showed how all this could be done: “You Too Can Be Like Us,” that was the implicit message of the Marshall Plan.<sup>10</sup>

None of the Western European nations were in any condition to openly challenge this kind of ideological power or to develop alternatives: the only government that tried, the British, failed miserably.<sup>11</sup> In the East stood the Cominform, the Soviet-bloc bureau set up in November 1947 with the explicit aim of generating a massive propaganda counteroffensive against the Marshall Plan in Western Europe as well as in its own sphere. So in the first great ideological clash of the cold war, the Italian general elections of April 1948, two great geopolitical narratives could be seen fighting it out head to head.<sup>12</sup>

The Marshall Plan was special because it was temporary, very intense, organized in close cooperation with the private sector of US business and the trade unions—and, above all, because it involved a mass propaganda operation. As a narrative of modernization, the Plan played a major role in introducing the concept, the language, and the techniques of *economic growth* to European political culture—an ever-expanding prosperity for an ever-expanding majority—and demonstrated its roots in constantly increasing productivity across and within Europe’s economic systems. As a specific geopolitical narrative, the ERP launched the concept and practice of “European economic integration” on its distinguished contemporary career; of course, the concept of “Europe” in this vision was limited to the part West of the Iron Curtain, and indeed any intercourse with the Eastern half was strongly discouraged. Up to then the plaything of a tiny group of visionaries, the Marshall Plan turned European integration into one of most serious political priorities of the age and provided the means to set it in motion. How the Europeans dealt with—even resisted—this challenge is another story. But for sure they had no alternative discourse of their own, and they were more than happy to accept a form of conditional dependence as long as the program kept functioning.<sup>13</sup>

## NATO AND THE ATLANTIC COMMUNITY

NATO’s history was characterized from the very beginning by a great deal of restlessness among its partners about the precise meaning of the transatlantic bargain struck in the name of Western defense mobilization. In comparison with the ERP, which was explicitly temporary, NATO would clearly endure as long as “the threat” persisted, which everyone agreed would be for years. The birth of the “Atlantic community,” dreamed of by

statesmen since the end of the nineteenth century and which had become part of the common language thanks to the writings of Walter Lippmann and others during World War II, was indeed accompanied by a great deal of hand-wringing.

Still young, the community—or was it just a coalition?—was expected to compensate for many a lost historical prospect: for the Americans, the dwindling of the United Nations' vision of a single world government; for the British, their being lumped in with the continental “indigents” in the American conception of Europe; for the imperial powers, the reduction of their world status through the process of decolonization; for all the Western Europeans, their dependence on American charity and arms and their loss of sovereignty; for Germany's ex-enemies, the necessity of sharing with her a new life-or-death struggle; for the Germans of the Federal Republic, the losses of the war, the occupations, the divisions; for all those who saw themselves as nations in a single European civilization, the loss of the East; for all who now lived in dread of atomic war, the collapse of the great wartime dreams of organizing the peace and prosperity of the postwar world on a rational, cooperative basis under the banner of the United Nations.

One version of the compensatory mechanism was well illustrated in the Italian case by Ennio Di Nolfo in 1986:

The Atlantic occasion . . . was a chance for Italy to recover its national role: to be in Europe, to be equal in Europe, to be for Europe. The Atlantic choice thus helped to substitute other formulas for the old nationalistic ones, without changing any basic values. It was the culminating point in the policy aimed at the recovery of national position, in a different but not dissimilar dimension, inspired by the models of power politics experienced in the past.<sup>14</sup>

Seen in these terms, the Soviet challenge, far from destabilizing the postwar order—which did not exist—appears as the only force strong enough to ensure that the Atlantic community did in fact come to function adequately to meet all the requirements addressed to it. Nothing had gone according to plan since 1945; only by brilliant improvisation and a vast investment in new political and economic resources were a series of arrangements put in place to stabilize the relationship between each nation's internal equilibria and its international commitments in the new era.

The point of the North Atlantic pact in its original pre-Korea form was psychological and political reassurance first of all. “The essential objective,” said the Senate Foreign Affairs Committee, “is increased security, not increased military strength,” while the key to the capacity of treaty-signers to resist attack “depends primarily upon their basic economic health.” Specifically, this meant increased industrial capacity and the development of labor resources—clearly fundamental objectives of the Marshall Plan.<sup>15</sup> Yet the treaty contained one element that seemed to presage a significant

expansion of its ambitions and responsibilities beyond the immediate security sphere. This was article 2, known as the “Canadian Article” in honor of its sponsor and framer, the Canadian prime minister Lester Pearson. The article states:

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.<sup>16</sup>

Pearson explained his purposes in an article that appeared in *Foreign Affairs* just as the treaty was signed. Previous such pacts had been formed to meet specific emergencies and had then been abandoned when the crisis was past (like the Anti-Hitler League, which Pearson implicitly suggested had nominally created the UN):

It must not be so this time. Our Atlantic union must have a deeper meaning and deeper roots. It must build up habits and desires of cooperation which go beyond the immediate emergency. By ministering to the welfare of the peoples of its member states, it must create those conditions and desires for united effort which make formal pacts unnecessary.<sup>17</sup>

At first sight it looks as though it was the pressure of the emergency that kicked article 2 into the long grass almost immediately. Yet a reading of the minutes of the North Atlantic Council—NATO’s founding body and steering mechanism—paradoxically shows that questions about article 2 increased after the Korean outbreak in June 1950, which brought the East-West confrontation to a new high of intensity and danger. Never has our Alliance commitment been more sorely tested, said the European members, never has there been greater need to explain our purposes, build legitimacy, reinforce our authority for needs well beyond the moment. Although talked about at the fourth session in May 1950 and in the press, only after the beginning of the Korean War (in September 1950, in fact) did NATO decide to equip itself with a Director of Information. However, he would be provided only with a “small subordinate staff, which would work through individual governments.”<sup>18</sup> Here was the start of the paradox at the heart of Atlanticism.

A preliminary reading of the NATO archives reveals that whatever its other achievements, the creation of that worldview and social institution was *not* one the Alliance sought or claimed. NATO as such never developed this official capacity, not at least in the form of a *grand récit géopolitique*

capable of explaining, structuring, and legitimizing its aims and purposes at all levels of society. People such as Bevin and Schuman demanded a “simple constructive project of equal vigor” to the fervor of the communists and said that the communist use of poverty as a political weapon should be met with iron promises of industrial development, as promised by the Organisation for European Economic Cooperation (OEEC; i.e., the Marshall Plan). But collective security with people one had fought against only yesterday was hard to imagine. What was needed, said Bevin in a May 1950 North Atlantic Council meeting, was “a declaration of faith, of great strength and character,” of faith in the West.<sup>19</sup> This was not just posturing: Bevin truly believed that the stakes were nothing less than the survival of his civilization. Yet he never produced the statement of principle he called for, and neither did his peers.<sup>20</sup>

Yet the impulse to do so remained. It was strongly encouraged by Eisenhower and reinforced in later meetings by De Gasperi, Stikker—and eventually even Acheson himself at one point in late 1951 gave birth to the short-lived Atlantic Community Committee.<sup>21</sup> But it produced a report and then suspended itself. While paying tribute to the need for developing the Atlantic community spirit on a wide scale, the members quickly recognized that cultural, informational, and propaganda campaigns should be the province of national governments above all; that NATO’s role “would appear to be primarily one of stimulation and encouragement of discussion and contact between interested groups and promoting the freer exchange of ideas”;<sup>22</sup> that the “habit of consultation” should be the guiding principle of all discussions of method,<sup>23</sup> together with the respect for the prerogatives of existing organizations (this would neutralize NATO’s impulse to promote economic action) and the development of specific and concrete measures within a general direction, rather than the realization of any grand design.<sup>24</sup>

This was October 1951, about the time Greece and Turkey were joining the Alliance, after Eisenhower had arrived as Supreme Commander, but before NATO as such had been formally constituted. Eisenhower was to prove a keen, convinced supporter of information and education efforts, and in April that year had told the first top-level NATO meeting on information policy that “the coalition will exist and prosper in direct proportion to the confidence and support given it by the free peoples of our several countries. This, in turn, depends wholly upon the effectiveness and honesty of the information that reaches them.”<sup>25</sup>

But the tone of this key meeting quickly changed when reality was grasped. The chairman—deputy chair of the Atlantic Council itself—immediately ruled out a central organization and insisted on local efforts first. The newly appointed head of NATO Information, a little-known Canadian official, said he was beginning late and with almost no resources. National information services would be key, but some nations had none, some several, some directed to overseas projection rather than domestic education.



He foresaw the development of a “facilitating service of minor proportions,” nothing like the United Nations’ Department of Public Information, which had 400 people and a budget of 3 to 4 million dollars (he later stated that his office disposed of one twentieth of 1 percent of the figure the Soviets were spending on propaganda).<sup>26</sup>

The delegates to the April 1951 gathering quickly brought out some of the differences that separated them. A Norwegian demanded a worldwide organization but with a special focus along the Iron Curtain, from Finland to Yugoslavia. The Italian delegate made an eloquent plea for the policy later called Roll Back. The Portuguese speaker said there must be no question of defending capitalism “which is a word—we must admit—hated by the great European masses.” He also rejected “the superimposition of influences from outside,” and the “creation of hegemonies.” The British speaker worried about the costs of rearmament and how they would be “sold” to the British public. The president of Paix et Liberté, the militant psychological warfare group sponsored by the CIA and the US unions, insisted that “like should be fought with like”; the opponent should be defeated with his own methods, including the clandestine variety. The point on which all seemed most agreed was that the Soviet propaganda challenge was strong and successful, and the West had nothing to match it. Their success in capturing the word “peace” and making it into a sort of trademark was before the eyes of everyone.<sup>27</sup>

From this meeting came a series of small initiatives and meetings. In August 1952 the projects planned included an edition of NATO stamps, the creation of new visual symbols, a photographic contest, visits by journalists and nongovernmental associations, exhibits on life beyond the Iron Curtain.<sup>28</sup> The Secretary General had proposed a long list of other activities, such as NATO Youth Camps, sports championships, exchanges, Parliamentary visits. But these seem to have remained mostly proposals, and a November 1952 report emphasised the centrality of national information programmes. A rededication to the “battle for men’s minds” came in February 1953 in the presence of the new secretary general, Lord Ismay, but again there was above all respect for the national programmes.<sup>29</sup>

In spite of this, national representatives complained that too little was being done, that the Soviets were winning all the propaganda battles, and that a true NATO feeling of mutual understanding and solidarity was lacking.<sup>30</sup> But at a time when American public diplomacy, cultural efforts, propaganda, and psychological warfare were running at a height never seen before or after, perhaps it was inevitable that this should be the case. Then again, the US Secretary of State in the formative years, Dean Acheson, was evidently never keen for NATO to function as anything other than a military organization, and he said so very bluntly at the beginning.<sup>31</sup> The changeover to Dulles seemed to have made no difference to this sphere of Alliance activities. Meetings were called, reports

written,<sup>32</sup> but very little happened; the military challenges continued to dominate, and five years would go by before the so-called political dimension was formally recognized.<sup>33</sup> Against the background of the Suez fiasco, the “Report of the Committee of Three on Nonmilitary Cooperation in NATO” finally acknowledged in December 1956 what had been said outside the organization for many years: that there was a need to create an “Atlantic Community whose roots are deeper even than the necessity for common defence.” Alongside a political and military “pooling of sovereignty,” there should also be a mutual push for “progress and cooperation generally.”<sup>34</sup>

## IN THE OUTSIDE WORLD

Whether the movement for Atlantic unity had as distinguished a pedigree as that for European integration is an open question, but for sure, when the North Atlantic Treaty was born in 1949, it was far stronger.<sup>35</sup> Leaving aside the special British Anglo-Saxon version, its contemporary incarnation was born with Clarence Streit’s *Union Now* of 1939, followed by a series of American books along similar lines, and particularly after Walter Lippmann’s use of the phrase “Atlantic community” in 1943, taking off from the Monroe Doctrine and the wartime Anglo-American alliance.<sup>36</sup> After the great success of Streit’s book, which aimed for a union of Western democracies, with their empires, as the nucleus of a world government based on a federal structure, movements began to grow.

“The return to Europe obviously did not represent a return to the past,” the Canadian historian John English wrote. “It represented rather an imaginative response to a threatened tradition that even an isolationist Lodge could now regard as a treasure.”<sup>37</sup> Canadians and Americans alike made common cause to defend their shared notion of Western civilization, says English. At Harvard, James Conant brought that canon into the heart of general education; and Arthur Schlesinger, like Lester Pearson, extolled the tradition of “democratic liberty” in *The Vital Center*. Parents bought Robert Hutchins’s “Great Books” for their children in greater quantities than ever before:

The sense that these books, that tradition, and those experiences had had a very close call in the 1930s and 1940s nourished the roots from which NATO emerged at mid-century. The strength of those roots explains its endurance; without them it would have withered in the bitter winds later in the century.<sup>38</sup>

Today it is hard to imagine the strength of the so-called movement for Atlantic union in its strongest years from 1949 to 1963, including—unlike the European integration movement—a strong, unofficial American

component. Parallel with the negotiation for NATO, a group of more than 800 leading Americans launched the Atlantic Union Committee in 1949 to promote the idea of a “Union of Atlantic democracies much more integrated than the Atlantic Alliance,” as one believer recalled. A leading senator, Estes Kefauver of Tennessee, followed the Senate’s ratification of NATO with a formal call for a convention of delegates, opening the way to an Atlantic constituent assembly.<sup>39</sup>

The Atlantic Union Committee was an influential body in the US, the high point of which was probably the Declaration of Atlantic Unity of 1954, signed by 244 leading citizens of nine NATO countries—including Truman, Marshall, and Acheson for the US—which called for a radical strengthening of Atlantic institutions after the collapse of the European Defence Community (EDC) plan.<sup>40</sup> This produced the so-called Atlantic Parliament, which still exists; the great Atlantic congress of London of 1959; the Atlantic Institute in Paris, a think tank that existed until the late 1980s; and the movement that transformed the OEEC of the Marshall Plan days into the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in 1961, by way of the inclusion of the US, Canada, and Japan.<sup>41</sup>

The high point of this wave was the Atlantic Convention of Paris in January 1962, explicitly modelled on the Philadelphia Convention of 1787, which set out to draft a constitution for the federal United States. This one would do the same for a federation of Atlantic nations. A Permanent High Council was proposed, rather like the Council of the European Economic Community (EEC); there would be an Atlantic Assembly, an Atlantic High Court of Justice, and an Atlantic Economic Community.<sup>42</sup> Enthusiasts included Jean Monnet, who spoke of

the extraordinary transforming power of common institutions. The issues raised by nuclear weapons, the underdeveloped areas, the monetary stability of our countries and even their trade policies, all require joint action by the West. What is necessary is to move towards a true Atlantic Community in which common institutions will be increasingly developed to meet common problems.<sup>43</sup>

The convention produced a resonant declaration, which lacked nothing in solemnity and self-importance. It was a strange moment. The convention explicitly welcomed “the spirit of President Kennedy’s recent statement that a trade partnership should be formed between the United States and the European Economic Community.”<sup>44</sup> And of course six months later came Kennedy’s Grand Design and the declaration of interdependence in Independence Hall, Philadelphia. This openly referred to the uniting of the thirteen colonies as a precedent for what might be achieved by the construction of a true Atlantic partnership.<sup>45</sup>

But critics soon noted the limits of Kennedy’s vision. There was no talk of federations, no impulse to build new institutions, no reference to the

Atlantic movement or the Paris convention.<sup>46</sup> In fact, the Kennedy impulse soon faded, finally killed off by de Gaulle's challenge, which had touched on every aspect of the political and strategic falsehoods that he saw underlying the Atlantic system. But Kennedy's efforts had also been attempts to bring European responsibilities into line with the realities of power in the Atlantic system as the Americans saw them by this time.

Lucid commentators on the spot warned the Kennedy Europeanists that times had changed and their efforts would not succeed. Ronald Steel's *End of Alliance* of 1964 was particularly prescient:

In the sense that it seizes upon the new kind of loyalty being created in Europe, and upon the desire to be both separate and different from America, Gaullism is far stronger than de Gaulle and is likely to outlive its chief exponent just as Bonapartism survived the demise of Napoleon.<sup>47</sup>

The accuracy of this prediction lasted for over forty years.<sup>48</sup> Not until the advent of President Sarkozy in 2007 would a reconciliation begin between French foreign policy and the Atlantic heritage.

## THE HERITAGE OF ATLANTICISM

By 1965 it was possible to list ten major private groupings that had worked or were still working to promote the Atlantic idea. They included the Atlantic Treaty Association, with fifteen national member groups; the Congress of European-American Associations; the International Movement for Atlantic Union (the original federalists with Streit still at the head); the Bilderberg Group; and the Atlantic Institute in Paris.<sup>49</sup> It was possible to talk of the emergence of an Atlantic ruling class<sup>50</sup> sharing, as Frank Costigliola put it, a supplementary identity “centered on an exaggerated sense of sameness—in particular a democratic heritage ostensibly common to Portugal and Turkey as well as to Britain and France—and a magnified sense of difference from the Soviet bloc.” The language of moral superiority, the ceremonials of impressive meetings where politicians from the smallest nations could mingle with the powerful of the earth, “emotional bonds involving kinship, friendship and association with things sacred”—in Costigliola's view, all these cultural and sentimental elements went into creating the “spirit” or “theology” of NATO.<sup>51</sup>

Charles Maier talks of an “imperial culture” under an Atlantic elite with “semi-sacral status: Marshall, McCloy, Lovett, Spaak, Monnet, and other ‘wise men’ who exhorted to common effort and cooperation . . . trans-Atlantic trips, common foreign policy forums, a network of clubby associations for talk and mutual self-regard created in effect a transnational ruling group.” Maier goes on:

Below this summit, a cadre of international civil servants served in Paris, Washington and elsewhere. Within two decades subsidiary networks arose around think-tanks, banks, unions etc . . . Mastery of English would become the cultural passport for every claimant to elite status.<sup>52</sup>

But was this elite happy with the outcome of all its efforts at networking and influence-sharing? There is reason to think not. “Closer Atlantic assimilation automatically flows from closer European integration,” affirmed a prominent American writer in 1969. But this never happened, and the reasons it didn’t could be masked by Atlanticism but not resolved by it. There was “a central tension,” wrote a British political scientist later, between “assumed cultural convergence (and) institutional and political separatism.” In other words, the fact that NATO remained an intergovernmental organization, with every member’s sovereignty unsullied.<sup>53</sup> A founding member of the Atlanticist elite, Harold Cleveland, had said bluntly in 1965 that from their Atlantic relationship “Americans expected something better—much better,” than what they’d got by that time. He explained:

They expected an Atlantic relationship in which conflicts of national interest, far from growing, would gradually give way to increasing co-operation, and in Western Europe’s case, to supranational union. They were not prepared to find themselves involved in the seemingly indefinite exercise of power which is no longer unambiguously desired by their European allies.<sup>54</sup>

Canadian historians, writing from the perspective of the inventors of article 2 and for whom Atlanticism was most explicitly a normative term, lamented the “dismal failure” of that project, and recalled Secretary of State Acheson’s suspicion of Canadian Lester Pearson’s “canting Methodism.”<sup>55</sup> The British political scientist Michael Smith explained that Atlanticism was meant to develop common norms and practices for organizing community, hierarchy, and partnership among its members. By the 1980s, though, “the image of Atlantic Partnership was promoted, but reality seemed more like a corrupted version of Atlantic Hierarchy . . . In all phases of the development of Atlantic relations problems have been caused by the asymmetry of relationships and perceptions, and by the conspicuous absence of any cumulative progress towards a new kind of international community.”<sup>56</sup>

Nevertheless, Atlanticism was always much more than support for NATO and much more than the set of related institutions: OECD, GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade), G-7, etc. Canadian commentator Robert Wolfe said that “It has a geographic base, but is most significantly a social institution . . . an organizing principle that helps us to see a pattern in a set of shared expectations among the participating countries.”<sup>57</sup> Wolfe quotes international relations theorist Robert Keohane in support of his arguments.

The Atlantic area is a zone of “complex interdependence” in this view, one where conventional definitions of power have been superseded. Instead peaceful, constructive relations depend on more or less conscious management of “rules, expectations and conventions,”<sup>58</sup> a means of communication—based on English, of course—“a mixture of beliefs and knowledge (all human constructs) about language, geography, history and culture,”<sup>59</sup> all of which brings us back surely to the question of stories and narratives.

## THE FATE OF THE TWO NARRATIVES

Which, then, has survived best, the myth of the Marshall Plan or Atlantism? The former of course has not ever again been tested in anything like a comparable situation. There have been repeated calls for a new Marshall Plan. After the fall of apartheid, South Africans called for a Marshall Plan. After the fall of the Berlin Wall, Eastern Europeans and Russians demanded the Marshall Plan they had been denied by the Soviet Union in 1947. The breakup of the Yugoslav republic provoked another demand of the same sort. The Italian government demanded such an operation for Palestine. Fearful of further disintegration in Africa, in 2005 the British government proposed coordinated international intervention along the lines of the Marshall Plan. One report says that the resource transfers from West to East Germany each year since the fall of the Berlin Wall were equal in volume to the whole of the European Recovery Program.<sup>60</sup> But the intra-German effort was never cast in those terms by anyone. The myth of the Plan had become as forceful as its true historical legacy, but it was never put to the test.

NATO of course continues to exist and is tested every day. After the fall of the Wall, Secretary of State James Baker declared “America is a European power” and called for a Kennedy-style renewal of the Alliance. In November 1990 came the joint “Declaration on US-EC Relations,” which celebrated decades of shared values, experiences, and aims, swore fresh allegiance to NATO and at the same time recognized the “accelerating process by which the European Community is acquiring its own identity.”<sup>61</sup> All that came out was the summit of Madrid of 1995, which saw the President of the EU, the President of the US, and the Secretary General of NATO meet together formally for the first time. The Gulf and the Yugoslav crises, the transformation in Russia and Germany’s positions, the enlargement of the EU and its economic stagnation, the euro/dollar contest: all have tested the old narrative to the limits. But none has brought it closer to breakdown than the Iraq war. Francis Fukuyama wrote soon afterwards that “an enormous gap has opened up between American and European perceptions about the world, and the sense of shared values is increasingly frayed.”<sup>62</sup>

In the views of many, the split was not simply about specific issues.<sup>63</sup> Rather, two different conceptions of the West seemed to be taking root in

the era of George W. Bush, two contrasting ideas of the sources of legitimacy in the construction of a Western society's place in the world. The American point of view was expressed brilliantly by Francis Fukuyama, who talked of his fellow citizens' refusal to acknowledge "any source of democratic legitimacy higher than the constitutional nation state." He explained:

To the extent that any international organization has legitimacy, it is because duly constituted democratic majorities have handed that legitimacy up to them (voluntarily and provisionally) in a negotiated, contractual, process . . . Europeans, by contrast, tend to believe that democratic legitimacy flows from the will of the international community much larger than any individual nation-state. This international community . . . hands down legitimacy to existing international institutions, which are seen as partially embodying it. The legitimacy of its actions are not in the end based on democratic procedural correctness, but on the prior rights and norms which come from a moral realm higher than that of the legal order.<sup>64</sup>

It was indeed at the moral level that many European commentators chose to express their worries over American behavior in the months and years after the invasion of Iraq. They also believed that two contrasting visions of the West seemed to be taking root in the era of George W. Bush, two contrasting visions of the meaning of the West's Enlightenment heritage at the level of moral values. French political commentator Alain Minc, Anglo-Australian writer Ian Buruma, senior German novelist Peter Schneider, and former Secretary General of NATO (the head of EU foreign policy in 2003) Javier Solana all expressed the same sentiments in articles soon after the US invasion of Iraq.<sup>65</sup> Solana talked of a "moral certainty of religious America [which] is hard to replicate in secular Europe." Minc mentioned the philosophical differences on the links between religion and the state, on abortion and the death penalty, and on the purposes of politics and war as a crusade. But it was Peter Schneider who best articulated what appeared to be at stake in the new situation:

Europeans think that Americans are on their way to betraying some of the elementary tenets of the Enlightenment, [the notion for instance] that human judgments and decisions are fallible by their very nature. In its language of power the Bush administration has created the opposite impression, establishing a new principle in which [Americans] are "first among unequals." [Meanwhile] Washington accuses Europe of shirking its international responsibilities, and thus its own human rights inheritance.

But as Schneider underlines, the dilemmas this situation provokes cannot readily be resolved within the usually accepted confines of the Enlightenment



heritage: “Who is the true advocate of human rights? the one who cites international law to justify standing by while genocide takes place or the one who puts an end to the genocide, even if it means violating international law?”

Minc—like Jürgen Habermas—suggested that a transatlantic divorce should take place, preferably a painless one, which meant saying “no” to anti-Americanism and “yes” to realizing there are important security and economic interests we all share, but different values of reference. Never was there a greater need for a commonly recognized “European individual,” suggested Minc. Other forms of the same drive to rebalancing were visible in Timothy Garton Ash’s reflections of 2005 and in the joint transatlantic declaration of intellectuals presented at the Brookings Institution in June 2007.<sup>66</sup>

The drift apart, if it is such, may have been developing for years.<sup>67</sup> After the cold war, Atlanticism fell into desuetude, and no one pretended that the “Partnership for Peace” with the Russians and others from 1994—or the entry of Hungary, Poland, the Czech Republic, et al. into NATO—brought the Alliance extra moral authority, legitimacy, or “soft power” in the sense of a form of hegemony whose workings ensured that others “spontaneously” came to share the leaders’ perceptions, values, and objectives.<sup>68</sup> By comparison, the European project seemed to forge ahead with its Maastricht Treaty (1992), Copenhagen Criteria (1993), monetary union (1999), Lisbon Agenda (2000), and all the rest. Experts began to ask whether “Americanization” and “Europeanization” were “rival projects or synonyms.”<sup>69</sup>

But it was precisely at the level of master narratives, geopolitical or otherwise, that the “soft power” advantage of the US over the Europeans became evermore apparent in the years after the cold war. While Nye’s idea has evolved and grown over the years as its notoriety has spread, at the heart of it remains an effort to find means to leverage the apparent popularity and success of the American model of modernity—what an Italian-American author has called “the hidden power of the American dream”—and its most typical contemporary product, popular culture, so that they become sources of support for the foreign policies of American governments.<sup>70</sup> In this effort, charismatic master narratives are an indispensable tool, which is the meaning of Nye’s emphasis on “the winning story.”

Seen from this perspective, the myth of the Marshall Plan looks like a triumph, one whose origins in the efforts of the Marshall Plan’s information, education, and propaganda programmes can be easily traced and, in theory, reproduced. But there are very few comparable examples, if any. Cold war narratives as constructed and deployed by the vast communications efforts of USIA, Radio Liberty, Radio Free Europe, and all the rest continue to have their aficionados. But they have lost much of their prestige since it has emerged that some of their efforts involved a deliberate—and concealed—crossing of the boundary between cultural diplomacy and psychological warfare.<sup>71</sup> In any event, too much conscious deployment of “soft power” immediately raises suspicions of manipulation and propaganda,

and the failures of the George W. Bush administration in this area are well known. The biggest American “soft power” success of the post–September 11 era may well have been the diffusion of the soft power notion itself, which as Nye has said has now been used—or abused—by “the US Secretary of State, the British Foreign Minister, political leaders and editorial writers as well as academics around the world.”<sup>72</sup>

The Europeans, by way of contrast, or at least the EU and its member nations, have become more and more conscious that they lack a master narrative that can inspire understanding, identification, and emotional support. Supporters of the European project had been warning of this problem for many years, ever since the “democratic deficit” of the EU institutions became unavoidable in the 1980s. Chancellor Patten of Oxford University, a former EU Commissioner, stated as much in 2006. The philosopher Jürgen Habermas has long insisted on the need to generate a shared European civic consciousness, ethos, and identity. The leading French international relations commentator, Dominique Moïsi, felt that Europe’s common institutions lagged behind even the everyday awareness that existed.<sup>73</sup> The technocratic approach embodied in the Constitutional Treaty of 2004, with its 200-plus pages of core text, plus forty protocols, annexes, and declarations, was the very opposite of what was required and was brought down by French and Dutch voters in 2005. Its supposedly modified and simplified version, published in 2007, was decisively rejected in the Irish referendum of 2008. A despondent Vaclav Havel—the intellectual hero of the Czech revolution of 1988, his nation’s first post–cold war president, and a long-time supporter of European integration—hoped that the European Union’s constitutional treaty would be kept alive somehow despite its rejection in Ireland. Once it had been ratified in all the other countries, the EU should then consider a simpler treaty, said Havel: “It would be best now to quietly select some three or four people who could create a beautiful, simple constitution that children could learn about at school.”<sup>74</sup>

Soon afterwards the Europeans gave themselves another chance when the new President of France, Nicolas Sarkozy, relaunched his idea of a “Union for the Mediterranean” (*not* “Mediterranean Union”) based on a process started under Spanish auspices in 1995. Organizing a vast gathering in Paris of all twenty-seven EU member states plus all those bordering on the Mediterranean Sea—forty-three governments in total—Sarkozy attempted to form a new sort of connection between Europe, North Africa, and the Middle East. The purpose was to tackle specific problems such as transport, energy, immigration, the environment, trade, food security, and many others. The notions of providing a new European link with Turkey and offering a common external space for Israelis and Palestinians to share were clearly also present in Sarkozy’s project.<sup>75</sup>

Trying his hand at creating a fresh geopolitical narrative for France and for Europe as well as for his bemused interlocutors, the French president said at one point that the Mediterranean was the source of “all faith, all

reason and all culture,” that it was there that the first “fraternal civilisation” was built and from there that the religions of the book were born. He said it had created a notion of happiness, wisdom and self-esteem, but also tragedy. It had pushed to the extreme “a zest for life and fascination with death.” His central passage, too grand to be called a soundbite, was: “If this future is to be great, if this future is to be bright, if this future is to be a future of peace, a future of justice and future of progress everyone will have to make an effort, as the Europeans did, to put an end to the deadly spiral of war and violence that, century upon century, sporadically brought barbarity to the heart of civilisation.”<sup>76</sup>

The BBC’s senior Europe commentator noted:

I think it was a governor of New York who came up with that great phrase “we campaign in poetry, we govern in prose.” Mr Sarkozy is one of those politicians who is full of surprises because he is always campaigning and never abandons poetry.<sup>77</sup>

This time the French tradition of *grands récits géopolitiques* has put representation well before reality. But should the two eventually come together in a form resembling the French President’s vision, Atlanticism might find itself with a new rival: *Méditerranéisme*.

## NOTES

- \* Parts of an earlier version of this essay have been published in *European Community, Atlantic Community?* ed. Valerie Aubourg, Gerard Bossuat, and Giles Scott Smith (Paris: Soleb, 2008).
1. Joseph S. Nye Jr., *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics* (New York: Public Affairs 2004); cf. *Hard Power or Soft Power? Transatlantic Perspectives*, Miliband Lecture on American Power in the 21st Century (London School of Economics, London, 6 March 2006).
  2. Nye, *Soft Power*, 106. Nye is basing his remarks here on John Arquilla and David Ronfeldt, *The Emergence of Neopolitik: Toward an American Information Strategy* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 1999).
  3. Karoline Postel-Vinay, *L'occident et sa bonne parole* (Paris: Flammarion, 2005). The intellectual origins in France of thinking on the relationship between geopolitics and discourse is traced briefly in Gearóid Ó Tuathail, “Introduction: Thinking critically about geopolitics,” in *The Geopolitics Reader*, ed. Ó Tuathail, Simon Dalby, and Paul Routledge (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), 3–4.
  4. Walter Lippmann, *U.S. War Aims* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1944).
  5. On the ambiguous nature of the Truman Doctrine from this point of view, see Gearóid Ó Tuathail, “Introduction Part 2,” in *The Geopolitics Reader*, 48–9.
  6. Cf. Postel-Vinay, *L'occident*, 143. Postel-Vinay is discussing here the impact of Francis Fukuyama’s formulation of “the end of history” in the United States and elsewhere after the end of the cold war; Fukuyama attempts to correct the popular impression of his views in “Does the West Still Exist?” in *Entre Kant*

- et Kosovo: Études offertes à Pierre Hassner*, ed. Anne-Marie Le Gloannec and Aleksander Smolar (Paris: Presses de Sciences Po, 2003), 43–4.
7. See the brief summary of the production of the “axis of evil” vision in Samuel F. Wells, “Transatlantic Ills: Diagnosis and Prescription,” in *Entre Kant et Kosovo*, 135.
  8. Adapted from Ellwood, “Film and the Marshall Plan,” in *Images of the Marshall Plan in Europe. Films, Photographs, Exhibits, Posters*, ed. Guenter Bischof and Dieter Stiefel (Innsbruck: Studienverlag, 2009), 61–8; cf. [www.marshallplanimages.com](http://www.marshallplanimages.com)
  9. Original document cited in David W. Ellwood, *Rebuilding Europe: Western Europe, America and Postwar Reconstruction* (London: Longmans, 1992), 163. The Austrian government later explained that ordinary people did not understand the macroeconomic language of the plan but could see its benefits visibly in goods, increased economic activity, and the force of the overall American commitment. Government of Austria, *Ten Years of the European Recovery Program in Austria (1948–1958): Economic Aid in the Service of International Understanding*, chapter on “Psychological Capital” (Vienna: 1958).
  10. Ellwood, *Rebuilding Europe*, 161–4. For the French experience of this strategy, see Brian McKenzie, *Remaking France: Americanization, Public Diplomacy, and the Marshall Plan* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2005), chapter 2.
  11. Ellwood, “The American Challenge,” 62.
  12. David W. Ellwood, “The 1948 Elections in Italy: A Cold War Propaganda Battle,” in *Ripensare il 1948: Politica, economia, società, cultura*, ed. Giovanni Tocci (Ancona: Il Lavoro Editoriale, 2000).
  13. David W. Ellwood, “America as a European Power: Four Dimensions of the Transatlantic Relationship, 1945 to the Late 1990s,” in *Three Postwar Eras in Comparison: Western Europe 1918–1945–1989*, ed. Carl Levy and Mark Roseman (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002).
  14. Cited in David W. Ellwood, “Italy, Europe and the Cold War: The Politics and Economics of Limited Sovereignty,” in *Italy in the Cold War: Politics, Culture and Society, 1948–58*, ed. Christopher Duggan and Christopher Wagstaff (Oxford: Berg, 1995), 40.
  15. Ellwood, *Rebuilding Europe*, 123.
  16. The North Atlantic Treaty is available online at NATO’s Web site, <http://www.nato.int/docu/basicxtxt/treaty.htm>.
  17. Lester B. Pearson, “Canada and the North Atlantic Alliance,” *Foreign Affairs* 27, no. 3 (April 1949): 378; John English, “Who Could Ask for Anything More? North American Perspectives on NATO’s Origins,” in *A History of NATO: The First Fifty Years*, ed. Gustav Schmidt (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001), 314–7, 318–9.
  18. North Atlantic Council, Minutes of Fourth Session, 15 May 1950, in NATO Archives, Brussels, IS-AC-0001, R4/1 (S); Council resolution 4/7; and Minutes of Fifth Session, 14 September 1950, *ibid.*, IS-AC-0010, C5-D/2. Cf. Harold Callender, “That Pivotal Area: Western Europe,” *New York Times*, 7 May 1950.
  19. North Atlantic Council, Record of Fourth Session (verbatim), 15 May 1950, NATO Archives, Brussels, IS-AC-0001, C4/R4.
  20. The background to Bevin’s beliefs in this area is explored in Frank Costigliola, “Culture, Emotion, and the Creation of the Atlantic Identity, 1948–1952,” in *No End to Alliance: The United States and Western Europe: Past, Present and Future*, ed. Geir Lundestad (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998), 26–9.
  21. North Atlantic Council, Minutes of Seventh Session, 17 September 1951, NATO Archives, Brussels, IS-AC-0001, C7-VR/4.

22. *Report of the Working Group of the Atlantic Community Committee*, 30 October 1951, NATO Archives, Brussels, IS-AC-0010, AC/10-D/I, 26.
23. *Ibid.*, 32.
24. *Ibid.*, 26–34.
25. NATO, Minutes of NATO International Information Meeting, 12–14 April 1951, NATO Archives, Brussels, S-AC-0010/001. The presence of Roscoe Drummond at the meeting, the head of Marshall Plan information in the ERP's Paris headquarters, shows a moment of continuity between the two organizations, but it seems to have been a rare one.
26. NATO, Minutes of NATO Information Conference, February 1953, NATO Archives, Brussels, IS-AC-0190, A/24-R/15.
27. Document cited in note 21.
28. NATO Secret Document AC/24-D1; and Consideration of NATO Information Projects, 21 August 1952, AC/24-D/5, NATO Archives, Brussels, IS-AC-0190.
29. Document cited in note 22.
30. Consideration of NATO Information Projects, 21 August 1952, AC/24-D/5; Information Policy Working Group, Summary of Meeting, Paris, 24 November 1952, AC/24-R/8; Information Policy Working Group, Summary of Meeting, Rome, 8 December 1952, AC/2-R-9, NATO Archives, Brussels, IS-AC-0190.
31. North Atlantic Council, Minutes of First Session, 17 September 1949, in NATO Archives, Brussels, IS-AC-0001, C/I-R/1.
32. E.g., the report of the Information Policy Working Group on the International Study Conference of the Atlantic Community, Oxford, 7–13 September 1952, in NATO Archives, Brussels, IS-AC-00190, AC/24-D/14.
33. Cf. reports in *New York Times* of 8 February 1953, 26 April 1953, and 11 October 1954 (the latter after the collapse of the European Defence Community project).
34. Cited in Helene Sjurson, "On the Identity of NATO," *International Affairs* 80 (July 2004): 690–91.
35. Istavan Szent-Miklosy, *The Atlantic Union Movement: Its Significance in World Politics* (New York: Fountainhead Publishers, 1965), 20–25.
36. *Ibid.*, 24; Livingston Hartley, *Atlantic Challenge* (Dobbs Ferry, NY: Oceana Publications, 1965), 11.
37. English, "Who Could Ask for Anything More?" 318.
38. *Ibid.*, 319.
39. Hartley, *Atlantic Challenge*, 52–58, 61–63.
40. The first version was published on 3 October 1954; *New York Times*, 4 October 1954.
41. Hartley, *Atlantic Challenge*, 62–75.
42. *Ibid.*, 65–71.
43. Cited *ibid.*, 71.
44. *Ibid.*, 97.
45. *Ibid.*, 62–3; cf. Robert O. Mead, *Atlantic Legacy: Essays in American-European Cultural History* (New York: New York University Press, 1969), 192–3.
46. Mead, *Atlantic Legacy*, 192; Jeffrey Glen Giauque, *Grand Designs and Visions of Unity: The Atlantic Powers and the Recovery of Western Europe 1955–1963* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), chapter 4.
47. Ronald Steel, *The End of Alliance: America and the Future of Europe* (New York: Viking Press, 1964), 79–81.
48. Its evolution from Pompidou onward is discussed in Pierre Melandri, "The Troubled Friendship: France and the United States, 1945–1989," in *No End to Alliance*, 116.

49. Valerie Augbourg, "Organising Atlanticism: The Bilderberg Group and the Atlantic Institute, 1952–1963," in *The Cultural Cold War in Western Europe 1945–1960*, ed. Giles Scott-Smith and Hans Krabbendam (London: Frank Cass, 2003), 92–105.
50. Kees van der Pijl, *The Making of an Atlantic Ruling Class* (London: Verso, 1984).
51. Costigliola, "Culture, Emotion, and the Creation of the Atlantic Identity," in *No End to Alliance*, 21–5.
52. Charles S. Maier, "Empires or Nations? 1918–1945–1989," in *Three Post-war Eras in Comparison*, 59–60; Michael Smith, "Atlanticism and North Atlantic Interdependence: The Widening Gap?" in *Interdependence on Trial: Studies in the Theory and Reality of Contemporary Interdependence*, ed. R. J. Barry Jones and Peter Willetts (London: Frances Pinter, 1984), 175.
53. Mead, *Atlantic Legacy*, 285; Smith, "Atlanticism and North Atlantic Interdependence," 176.
54. Harold van B. Cleveland, *The Atlantic Idea and Its European Rivals* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 1966), 164.
55. English, "Who Could Ask for Anything More?" 310, 432; Robert Wolfe, "Atlanticism Without the Wall: Transatlantic Cooperation and the Transformation of Europe," *International Journal* XLVI (Winter 1990/1991): 140.
56. Smith, "Atlanticism and North Atlantic Interdependence," 170, 192.
57. Wolfe, "Atlanticism Without the Wall," 140, 138.
58. *Ibid.*, 151.
59. *Ibid.*, 153–54. Views of Atlanticism and NATO in 2008 in *The World Today*, August 2008; *IP Global Edition*, Summer Issue (this is the journal of the German Council on Foreign Relations); special edition of *International Affairs* (July 2004).
60. *La Repubblica*, 14 May 2005.
61. René Schwok, *US-EC Relations in the Post-Cold War Era: Conflict or Partnership?* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1991), 222–26.
62. Fukuyama, "Does the West Still Exist?" in *Entre Kant et Kosovo*, 32.
63. Listed in *ibid.*, 32–3; and discussed in Wells, "Transatlantic Ills," 133–34. Fukuyama suggests that Europe has become "a placeholder for global attitudes critical of American foreign policy." Cf. Erik Jones, "Debating the Transatlantic Relationship: Rhetoric and Reality," *International Affairs* (July 2004): 595–612.
64. Fukuyama, "Does the West Still Exist?" in *Entre Kant et Kosovo*, 37–38. Much of the British unhappiness regarding their relations with the European project surely stems from their difficulty in steering between these two poles with a clear, instinctive preference for the American one.
65. Alain Minc, *Corriere della Sera*, 5 November 2004; Ian Buruma, *Financial Times*, 10 January 2004; Peter Schneider, *International Herald Tribune*, 7 April 2004; Javier Solana, *Financial Times*, 8 January 2003.
66. Jürgen Habermas, *L'Occidente diviso* (Rome and Bari: Laterza, 2005), chapter 3; Timothy Garton Ash, *Free World: America, Europe and the Surprising Future of the West* (New York: Penguin, 2005); Tony Judt, "Europe versus America," *New York Review of Books*, 10 February 2005.
67. Geir Lundestad, *The United States and Western Europe Since 1945: From "Empire" by Invitation to Transatlantic Drift* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), chapter 10.

68. Joseph S. Nye Jr., "Soft Power," *Foreign Policy*, Fall 1990; Joseph S. Nye Jr., *Power in the Global Information Age: From Realism to Globalization* (London and New York: Routledge, 2004), chapter 6.
69. This was the title of a conference held in April 2005, organized jointly by European Studies at Oxford and the Rothermere American Institute.
70. Nye, *Soft Power*, chapters 4 and 5; Giovanna Dell'Orto, *The Hidden Power of the American Dream: Why Europe's Shaken Confidence in the United States Threatens the Future of U.S. Influence* (Oxford: Greenwood, 2008).
71. Cf. essays in *Cultural Cold War*, parts I and II.
72. Nye, *Power in the Global Information Age*, 5.
73. Remarks by the Chancellor of Oxford University, Chris Patten, St. Antony's College, Oxford, 1 March 2006; Habermas, *L'Occidente diviso*, 68–69 and chapter 5; in general, Dominique Moïsi, "9 novembre 1989–11 septembre 2001: l'âge de la mondialisation," in *Entre Kant et Kosovo*, 172.
74. *Financial Times*, 4 July 2008.
75. Joint Declaration of the Paris Summit for the Mediterranean, Paris, 13 July 2008; Claire Spencer, "Eyeing Other Shores," *The World Today*, July 2008.
76. Cited by BBC correspondent Mark Mardell at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/thereporters/markmardell/>, 13 July 2008; the Web site of the French president does not carry this speech.
77. *Ibid.*



# 7 The Congress for Cultural Freedom

## Constructing an Intellectual Atlantic Community

*Giles Scott-Smith*

In his insightful critique of the exercise of US power after World War II, Ronald Steel declared the following: “Struggling against Communism, we created a counter-empire of anti-Communism.”<sup>1</sup> This essay aims to pick up from Steel’s comment, first by examining the concept of the Atlantic community from the perspective of “American empire,” and second by interpreting the purpose of the Congress for Cultural Freedom (CCF) within this scenario.

### INTERPRETING AMERICAN EMPIRE

The classic definition of “empire” refers to the expansion of a nation-state to assert its power and control over other territories by conquest or coercion and to maintain that control over the long term. It is possible to argue that the continental expansion of the United States during the nineteenth century was imperial in intent. However, the American experience in extending its direct control overseas in the early twentieth century, particularly to the Philippines, resulted in a different outcome. The bloody war against a determined insurgency cost many lives and undermined any ambitions that existed for creating an American empire in the traditional sense.<sup>2</sup> But the drive to shape global politics and economics according to US interests remained, albeit by different means. While traditional empires were closed-off realms revolving around the demands of the metropole, the American empire would involve, in the words of Andrew Bacevich, “a commitment to global openness”:

Its ultimate objective is the creation of an open and integrated international order based on the principles of democratic capitalism, with the United States as the ultimate guarantor of order and enforcer of norms . . . In the eyes of American policymakers, an open world that adheres to the principles of free enterprise is a precondition for continued American prosperity. An open world that is friendly to liberal values seemingly assures American security.<sup>3</sup>

This kind of imperial endeavor involved a cooperative venture between the private sector and government and entailed the expansion of corporate influence and philanthropic benevolence alongside (and in collusion with) government promotion of democracy abroad. Tony Smith refers to this early twentieth century as the “classic” era of US liberal internationalism, closely associated with President Wilson’s linkage of the expansion of democratic governments abroad with the needs of US national security.<sup>4</sup> Wilson’s declaration to make the world safe for democracy has continued to echo long and hard through US foreign relations since, such that “American policy makers, whether or not they thought of themselves as Wilsonian, consistently sought a ‘new’ world order to replace the one established by European-style imperialism.”<sup>5</sup>

The ideological drive for a reordering of global politics, perpetrated with the conviction that the national interest of the United States merged seamlessly with the general interests of everyone else, is therefore clear. What is of interest here are the means and the methods for implementing this drive in practice. At this point it is worth referring to the recent work of Charles Maier, which provides the inspiration for the next stage of analysis. In *Empires*, Maier refers to the essential function of transnational elites as a force—and a means—to hold together and to extend an empire. Thus, following World War II, the United States did not set out to impose its direct rule in Western Europe over the long term, but instead “nurtured” a new transatlantic political elite. Every empire is hierarchical and stratified with power radiating out from the metropole, but these differences can be “flattened out” by a merging of interests. Thus:

Elites of differing ethnic or national units therefore bought into US empire because their subordinate role was accommodated via the belief in common ideals, the reward and sense of empowerment of joining forces with empire (i.e., with history), and the use of imperial power for reaching domestic goals and settling scores.<sup>6</sup>

Elite supporters in Europe were mobilised by the recognition of common security concerns, economic assistance, and (not to be belittled) covert subsidies and psychological warfare. In place of exercising hard power, in the European case, US empire involved much more the promotion of “public goods” with which Europeans themselves could recognize and realize their own stake in the whole enterprise:

Successful empire requires a delicate balancing act. On the one hand, the metropole must propagate a compelling set of norms and beliefs and artistic canons that enlist loyalties of diverse ethnic or religious communities and classes. On the other hand, an empire must let these component communities enjoy a fair degree of internal development. The optimum imperial outcome occurs when subject nations and their leaders voluntarily emulate the metropole’s values and tastes.<sup>7</sup>

Any imperial system is necessarily hierarchical, but the crucial point is how the hierarchical relationships are wielded from the center. Thus the “morality” of an empire, in terms of the “degree of consent on the part of those within its scope,” becomes a decisive factor.<sup>8</sup> What kinds of public good were on offer? There was the promise of postwar recovery and socio-economic prosperity as exemplified by the European Recovery Program. There was the comfort of security offered by NATO and a US military presence in Western Europe. Alongside these were the intertwined processes of the “market empire,” whereby Europe became the site “where the United States turned its power as the premier consumer society into the domination that came from being universally recognized as the fountainhead of modern consumer practices.”<sup>9</sup> What concerns us here, however, are the efforts to clarify and gather together the intellectual public goods of the post-World War II, US-led group of nations, because it was on this terrain that the concept of an Atlantic community was significant. The portrayal of such a community as a common civilization in terms of both improving material capabilities and ethical (democratic) standards was a clear means to symbolically pull both sides of the Atlantic together. Within this intellectual transatlantic culture, the Congress for Cultural Freedom played a key role. The CCF was not so much part of an “empire by invitation”<sup>10</sup> as a means to merge the antitotalitarian impulses of the Europeans with the social scientific paradigms of the Americans in a reconfiguration of the role and responsibility of the intellectual in postwar society. It was not for nothing that the first major study of the CCF declared: “It enjoyed a sense of embodying an idea whose moment had come. With the gradual disintegration of the Soviet mythos, it felt itself in the avant-gard, at the very center of a redefinition of civilization.”<sup>11</sup>

## INTERPRETING THE ATLANTIC COMMUNITY

There were two broad ways of interpreting the Atlantic community concept. The first was a conservative reading that focused on it as no more than the cultural-ideological component to the security alliance that united North America with Western Europe. There was an instrumental logic to this which made it a political necessity, however forced it may have appeared in practice.<sup>12</sup> Policy makers recognized the need to unite Western nations psychologically but never really went beyond this in considering what the consequences might be for actual policy itself. It was, in a way, an exercise in “niche politics,” highlighting links between nations that already existed and that served a certain purpose in filling a gap in the ideological defense of the West. This attitude is best illustrated by a memo from the Office of the US Special Representative in Europe in March 1953, reviewing the further development of psychological strategies in Europe:

The Atlantic idea should be fostered as the expression of an underlying community of interests that already exists, apart from any particular organisational or legal forms, and in due proportion to other regional community concepts.<sup>13</sup>

The second approach was more radical. This regarded the Atlantic community as something that was still very much in progress, the ultimate aim being the political and economic organization of the Atlantic area on various integrated—some even felt supranational—levels. Asked to review US strategy within the context of transatlantic relations for the Psychological Strategy Board in 1952, Harold van B. Cleveland stated that “the military aspect of the Atlantic Community, symbolized by NATO, is a subordinate function, though a vital one: a means to the more positive common goals of the Community.” For Cleveland, these common goals required that US policy and national interests would need to be adapted to accept the costs for creating a “democratic ethic of social justice” between nations. It would not be possible, in other words, for an Atlantic community to have any credibility without the US conceding that it must itself alter its policies and interests in order to accommodate more the needs of others.<sup>14</sup> The failure to do so exposed the fact that references to the community were often no more than a rhetoric of convenience.

The Atlantic community was rarely defined but used often, in some ways as a “speech act” whereby its mere utterance seemed sufficient to conjure up the appropriate associations, ways of thinking, and modes of behavior. Significantly, in security thinking, speech acts have an extra connotation as being “distinguishable by the urgency that is attached to them in political discourse.”<sup>15</sup> From the perspective of internationalist interests in both the US and Europe, there was a definite need to create this act, but the outcome was far from certain. In his review of Atlantic history as a definable phenomenon within the academy, Bernard Bailyn has remarked how the flurry of writing after World War II on the subject did *not* reflect the projecting of contemporary politics back into history, but neither was it conducted in an unaware apolitical vacuum. There were many common roots that fed into the dense network of transatlantic relations, but no common thread that suggested a particular outcome. The battle over different conceptions of the community reflected many concerns, not least the requirement to forge a successful US-led alliance in opposition to the communist bloc. According to Bailyn, therefore, these historians “were disengaged from politics, but they were people of their time.”<sup>16</sup>

What purposes did the projection of an Atlantic community serve? Three principal concerns will be discussed here.<sup>17</sup> First, there was the need to overcome the power differential between the United States and Western Europe since too steep a hierarchy would emphasize the imperial nature of US power. The Atlantic community concept—and by extension its many components, such as the CCF—was a means to manage the “charitable

status” of Europe and its own retreat from imperial dominance. But it was more than simply a means to cope with European decline since it also promoted the transnationalist, if not supranationalist, line that independent national paths to solving postwar political, economic, and security dilemmas were no longer inadequate. The limits to practical sovereignty had been reached, and outside help was necessary; and this could be made more palatable if the recovery of European political status and economic independence was carried through within the context of common goals directed toward the future. The issue of European morale was crucial here. Returning to Harold van B. Cleveland, in his 1952 report he pointed out that any successful US strategy had to avoid any emphasis on either the provision of charity or aid or the presumption that it should be led by narrow US national interests. Both were short-term, reversible, an inadequate reflection of the type of US leadership required, and guaranteed to cause insecurity and resentment among the receiving audience. Instead, any plan of action had to be a communal effort:

[It] should be an attempt to put some positive content—moral content and economic-political content—into the Atlantic Community concept which has so far been defined almost exclusively in military terms. The problem is to evoke in European and American minds a sense of the political and moral solidarity of the group of nations constituting the Atlantic Community.<sup>18</sup>

Second, there was the use of Atlantic community idealism as a force for unity in reconciling differences and tensions between a relatively disparate group of states. To forge a credible alliance under US leadership, a level of international cooperation was required that would be far distant from the autarky and aggressiveness of the 1930s. In particular, there was a need to overcome French suspicion of Germany, Germany’s ostracism, Britain’s economic weakness, Italy’s political isolation, as well as the US-Europe division with, in Cleveland’s words, “a conception of mutual responsibility” based on “the conditions of economic growth and security against communist aggression.”<sup>19</sup> Any such force for unity required not just economic incentives and political pressure, but also a common ideal and common ethic which would bond the community emotionally.

Third, there was a definite need to counter alternative political and economic paths. The Soviet threat was certainly a force that brought about a greater level of cooperation within the West, and the consequence of this was a determined attempt within the US-led framework to exclude other arrangements that might undermine and dissolve the Atlantic alliance. The principle threat in this scenario was the emergence of a European “third way” politics that would seek to position Europe between the superpower blocs. The dangers that this kind of neutralism would pose for the Alliance were such that the occasional proposals during the 1950s for nuclear-free

or neutral zones in central Europe were never seriously considered in the West. From an Atlantic community perspective, the values and goals that the West stood for were indivisible, and “third way” politics could only represent a kind of Trojan horse for Soviet interests that would allow nations to be played off against each other in a gradual spiral of disunity.

For these reasons, the Atlantic community concept had to involve the organization of a clear and stable civil as well as political culture. In this respect the CCF was a part, albeit a prominent one, of a network of anti-communist organizations formed between 1948 and 1952 to oppose similar Soviet fronts operating on the same terrain.<sup>20</sup> The list is as follows: August 1948, World Assembly of Youth (to oppose World Federation of Democratic Youth); December 1949, International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (to oppose World Federation of Trade Unions); June 1950, CCF (to oppose Soviet-backed world peace movement); November 1951, International Federation of Deportees and Resistance Internees (to oppose Federation Internationale des Resistants); January 1952, Coordinating Secretariat of the International Student Council (to oppose the International Union of Students); May 1952, International Federation of Journalists (to oppose the International Union of Journalists); July 1952, International Commission of Jurists; August 1952, World Confederation of Organizations of the Teaching Profession (to oppose Communist dominance of World Federation of Teachers Unions). Every field of professional activity, in other words, could offer a platform for the dissemination of a worldview; and the greater the prestige of the profession, the greater the reach of its pronouncements. Above all, it was essential that the lines connecting these organizations with the overt power structures of the US-led order had to be kept out of sight. These were spontaneous organizations representing the immediate interests of concerned citizens in free societies threatened by a totalitarian enemy. Yet the story was far more ambiguous and complicated. The World Assembly of Youth, the CCF, the Coordinating Secretariat, the International Federation of Journalists, and the International Commission of Jurists all had connections, either directly or via cut-outs, with the CIA. Civil society in the Atlantic community needed to organize to display its credibility and determination, and the Agency could lend a helping hand to ensure that it did so.<sup>21</sup>

#### **THE SUPPORTING ROLE OF THE CCF WITHIN THE ATLANTIC COMMUNITY**

It is important to stress that the Congress for Cultural Freedom never explicitly addressed in its seminars, conferences, or publications the concept of an Atlantic community as a subject of interest.<sup>22</sup> Within the context sketched above, however, the CCF did perform several essential tasks in contributing toward sustaining a Euro-American alliance. First, there was

the nurturing of transatlantic elites. This refers to the bringing together of intellectuals from various standpoints, backgrounds, and nationalities in such a way that the hierarchies of the US-led order dissolved into a common cause. The CCF in effect acted as a leveller, compensating for the power difference between the US and Europe. As Maier has indicated, “out of constraint, convenience, or conviction,” the elites of other nations bought into the United States’ informal empire because their subordinate role was accommodated via an expression of common ideals, the reward and sense of empowerment of joining forces with empire (i.e., with history), and the use of imperial power for reaching domestic goals and settling scores.<sup>23</sup>

In security affairs, the United States’ nuclear capability, the stationing of forces in Western Europe, and the overall orientation of NATO emphasized the facts of US predominance. Economically, the situation was the same; and politically, the powers of the president effectively reached into every corner of European affairs. Yet in the field of high culture, the situation was very different. Here the United States was at a disadvantage, open to communist and conservative-nationalist criticisms of its empty materialism and lack of a rooted tradition of culture excellence. The CCF therefore had an important dual role: to promote Western culture as part of a common US-European civilization; and to promote US cultural achievement as not only an essential contribution to, but also the future leading edge of, Western culture as a whole.<sup>24</sup> The CCF’s “Masterpieces of the Twentieth Century Festival” in Paris in 1952 was a perfect indication of this dual approach; it displayed the virtuosity of American cultural producers and performers (including Europeans who had crossed the Atlantic as refugees of fascism and nazism) and their seamless incorporation, on equal terms, within the previously European-dominated Western cultural tradition. The United States clearly was not just the savior of Western culture against totalitarianism but also its leading proponent.<sup>25</sup> This position was most clearly demonstrated in the social sciences, where the US held the leading edge by developing theories of efficient sociopolitical organization (even though, once again, it rested on an intermingling of Euro-American intellectual standpoints fuelled by the influence of the émigrés from fascism and nazism in the 1930s).<sup>26</sup> The CCF was an ideal vehicle for promoting the individual ambitions and collected results of this intellectual hybridity as a resource for informal empire.

Second, in support of the Atlantic community as a force for unity, there was the essential process of establishing norms. Charles Maier has referred to how “good fences make good empires,”<sup>27</sup> keeping the subordinates in and the barbarians out. In a similar way the CCF was an “intellectual frontier,” setting the boundaries for acceptable, progressive thought (anticommunism, antineutralism). Whereas Marxist thinking was inextricably linked to the power ambitions and expansionism of the Soviet Union, the CCF presented itself as operating in an apparently free space of intellectual thought that just happened to coincide with the ambitions of a US-led world order. Yet this



belies how combative it was in defining its role. Thus the manifesto that was drafted at the inaugural CCF meeting in West Berlin in June 1950 called for the defense of “intellectual freedom” as “one of the inalienable rights of man,” and it went on to claim that any “indifference or neutrality” towards the challenge of totalitarianism “amounts to a betrayal of mankind and to the abdication of the free mind.”<sup>28</sup> This was the most stark declaration of the CCF’s policing role, used here in the Foucauldian sense of contributing toward establishing a dominant discourse and claiming the power to determine that other truth-claims must be judged against it.<sup>29</sup> As Foucault noted, “each society has its own regime of truth . . . that is, the type of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true,” and the CCF was part of the regime of truth of the cold war West, operating as a kind of “normalizing technology” to determine the acceptable from the unacceptable in terms of both intellectual output *and* behavior.<sup>30</sup> Likewise, the location of the CCF’s headquarters in Paris, that postwar intellectual warzone, staked out its intent in no uncertain terms. Paris was after all the avatar for the European cultural avant-garde, and its polarized view of intellectual life was summed up best by Sartre’s proclamation in early 1949 that “one must choose between the USSR and the Anglo-Saxon bloc.”<sup>31</sup> The French tended to operate in their own universe, and winning them over would be difficult, if not impossible. But the intent to do so was there, and certain prominent figures, in particular Raymond Aron, were prepared to lead the way.

Geopolitically, the borders of the Atlantic community were clear (more or less, considering the stretch to include Italy), but intellectually, it was meant to be borderless, representing the omnipresent cause of the freedom of the mind, something that any intellectual, true to their vocation, was obliged to recognize. Claiming the foundations of tradition was essential here. Hence Edward Shils’s designation of the CCF as a continuation of the “Enlightenment project”:

The Congress for Cultural Freedom stands in a tradition of intellectuals of a common outlook joined together in a common task—it is a product of the 18<sup>th</sup>-century Enlightenment. I think it is not wrong to see its forerunners in the circle which produced the *Encyclopédie*.<sup>32</sup>

In this way, the Congress for Cultural Freedom positioned itself as a transnational force outside or *above* more petty national and ideological struggles. Just as the Atlantic community concept incorporated otherwise isolated or divided nations, so too did the CCF incorporate those otherwise excluded (the Germans in particular) or exclusionist (the British). The CCF had a number of means to achieve this—conferences, competitions, books—but the most effective and most lasting was the network of journals it established, among them *Encounter*, *Preuves*, *Tempo Presente*, *Cuardenos*, *China Quarterly*, and *Quadrant*. They functioned, with varying success, as the national components (the embodiment of the national intellectual

communities) for the CCF's transnational movement. But the CCF was also an ideal refuge, or more positively, a platform for those isolated in their national intellectual scenes, thereby corralling the heterogeneous, disorganized anticommunist groups and individuals. Figures such as Koestler (in the beginning), Silone, Laqueur, Aron (the "peripheral insider," as Tony Judt has called him), or even Oppenheimer were perfect for the CCF since they could use the transnational stage as a means to address or even bypass the opposition they faced at the national level.<sup>33</sup>

Third, there was the need to counter alternative paths. Victoria de Grazia has referred to how the US market empire projected a democratic ethos and "peaceableness" as positive values for others; but the CCF, like the Atlantic community concept, needed to do more. The CCF's instrumentality in the form of the role of the CIA is its most obvious aspect, but this should not overshadow all of its content and purpose. It was more, in other words, than the sum of its propaganda parts. It was one thing to exclude and negate the relevance and applicability of Marxism-Leninism for the modern world. But having created this intellectual boundary, what was its *constructive* function? Soviet propaganda successfully tied anticommunism to fascism, and everyone was against that. For many, according to Judt, "communism was less a matter of conviction than an affair of faith,"<sup>34</sup> and that meant faith in a better, more just, more morally correct future involving the dismantling of inequalities and injustices that dominated the past and realizing the hopes that drove the successful struggle against fascism/nazism. Some kind of counter-faith to the continuing specter of communism was needed. There were those who found this abhorrent, such as Isaiah Berlin, but there were equally those such as Czeslaw Milosz in *The Captive Mind* who looked for this more than anything else. In this regard it is important to reflect on how the CCF was built on the experience of the 1930s, when liberal democracy seemed to be overwhelmed by political forces more attuned to the movements and demands of the age. For those who set up the CCF, the memories of that decade were still fresh. An intellectual bulwark to defend the merits of capitalism and democracy was essential.

The closest the CCF came to a counter-faith was in its move to showcase the "end of ideology," most notably at the Milan "Future of Freedom" conference in 1955 and in the ideas that were developed in its subsequent smaller-scale seminars on this theme.<sup>35</sup> This pointed the way not only to the end of scarcity through hyperproductive capitalism, but also to the application of behavioralism and technocratic management for the solution of all socioeconomic problems.<sup>36</sup> By bringing together the key thinkers on this terrain—Daniel Bell, Seymour Martin Lipset, Edward Shils, and Raymond Aron—the CCF provided the perfect packaging for these standpoints as a transatlantic product. End of ideology was based on pragmatism and efficiency, but it was also visionary, coinciding as it did with the development of modernization theory and, soon, the completion of Walt

Rostow's "anti-Communist manifesto," *The Stages of Economic Growth*. By extending this mode of thinking to the rest of the globe, the CCF thus became a forum for managing European imperial retreat by promoting the expertise of US-European world leadership for the successful development of the Third World, along the way building alliances with non-Western intellectuals who associated with this cause.<sup>37</sup>

The main intellectual contest for the CCF was not so much in opposing pro-Soviet manifestations but in being able to assert its normative role enough to exclude and discredit "third way" thinking. The European "third way" represented something of a disparate movement, uniting different elements in different countries but generally centered around neutralist, pacifist, and/or antinuclear standpoints allied to a yearning for a recovery of European independence separate from the superpowers. It was a politics based on principle not dogma, "a politics beyond antagonism" that looked to transcend the rigidities of the East-West divide by opening up a political space that could "escape the limitations of this logic of opposition."<sup>38</sup> "Third-way" thinking necessarily perceived the existing dominant options as limited or exhausted or, in this case, dangerous, serving only specific limited interests at the expense of *the people*. It expressed a strong ethical dimension in its view of human subjects as active not passive, able to create a more just community based on genuine interests and values. Significantly, "third way" movements tend to arise at times of dislocation (war, economic disruption, civic strife) and crisis (failure of existing alternatives to solve this), offering a confirmation of human potential to find solutions. In *Between Past and Future*, a series of essays written during the 1950s, Hannah Arendt spoke of intervals in time "altogether determined by things that are no longer and by things that are not yet,"<sup>39</sup> out of which a diagonal "third force" could emerge that rejects linear development and offers new possibilities. This imagery fits perfectly the immediate postwar period when the wartime alliance broke down but the East-West division had not yet solidified.

Significantly, the "third way" was more of a threat to the US empire rather than the Soviet empire. It was the Soviet Union that saw the opportunities to latch onto third-way interests and incorporate them within its own strategy. The World Peace Council and its rolling series of conferences and manifestations from 1948 onward, the peace initiatives on Germany in 1952, and the demilitarization proposals in the late 1950s were all designed to latch on to the hope for deescalation present in Western society, thereby weakening Western unity and resolve and potentially splitting Europe from the US. The Korean War and US demands for rearmament pushed many in Europe to question the direction the Atlantic alliance was taking under US leadership, which caused some to "mentally disengage" from the vigilance demanded by the cold war.

Did the "third way" ever threaten to materialize, or was it no more than the specter that haunted Atlanticist Europe during the cold war? There

were of course advocates of the “third way” on the political right, but they were either hampered by their claims to a negative nationalism (such as Otto Strasser) or the material limits to their ambition (as with de Gaulle).<sup>40</sup> What was more important was the crucial position of the social democratic parties across Western Europe as the pivotal center-left, or “non-Communist left” (NCL) in American parlance. The West European Left had two fundamental foreign policy options: nationalist neutralism or transnational Euro-Atlanticism.<sup>41</sup> Neither was forged into a coherent platform for consistent policy making on foreign affairs. Neutralists demanded a “third way” European bloc between the US and the USSR, which would rest on a recovered national sovereignty. This was the view of the Socialists in the neutral countries (Austria, Sweden, Finland), the German SPD and the Italian PSI (until the late 1950s), and the left wing of the moderate parties elsewhere. They may have been morally right, but they could not escape the problem that they effectively aided Soviet policy aims. It was difficult for the neutralists to claim autonomy from the Communist parties when the latter proclaimed the same standpoints. It was also too disparate a group that could not unite around a clear transnational platform (after all, they *were* nationalists). On the other hand were the Atlanticists, who were in the majority. This group was led by the British, Dutch, and Norwegian Labour parties and trade unions, with the weaker French SFIO in alignment. Their “third way” was primarily a matter of domestic policy, consisting of a commitment to social democracy and the mixed economy welfare state in between free-market capitalism and state socialism. Internationally, they accepted, if not supported, the *Pax Americana*. The Socialist International (SI) was their main transnational platform, a body which was revived in June 1951 and which combined a commitment to parliamentarism, civil liberties, and the Western alliance. Yet the SI was largely ineffective, except to provide another normative institution defining the intellectual frontiers of acceptable socialism. Within this broad context the CCF did play a key role as a forum for the incorporation of revisionist thinkers among the European Social Democratic parties, particularly from Britain and Germany, into the progressive ideology of the End of Ideology debate.<sup>42</sup> By lifting reformist thinkers out of their national context and providing them with an international stage, the Congress contributed to the legitimacy of European reformist socialism and its gradual move toward the political high ground of power in the 1960s.

## CONCLUSION

Clearly, then, the Congress for Cultural Freedom served particular purposes within the Atlantic community ideal of the 1950s and 1960s. Does it equally fit within a concept of US empire? In terms of the nurturing of transnational elites, the CCF was as much a European as an American

operation, CIA notwithstanding. The Agency may have been financially and ideologically behind it, but the inspiration for the organization and the intellectual directions it took were as much European as American in origin. The withdrawal of hard-line American anticommunists in its early years (James Burnham, Irving Brown), plus the demise of the American Committee for Cultural Freedom in the mid-1950s, were clear signs that this was not just an extension of US intellectual interests and that the need to ensure a transatlantic consensus in outlook was a strong one.<sup>43</sup>

The CCF undoubtedly attempted to embody the intellectual *Zeitgeist* of the postwar Atlantic community. This did not mean simply setting artificial boundaries to thought and deed as prescribed by a militant anticommunism, but also marking out the directions that progressive thought might take and what it might be concerned with. Nevertheless, the normative aspect of this demanded the right to declare what was and was not acceptable. In the words of Foucault, truth “isn’t the reward of free spirits” but “is produced only by virtue of multiple forms of constraint.”<sup>44</sup> Empires, as Maier reminded us, have their boundaries, as intellectual as they are physical.

In the end, however, the organization proved to be too Establishment—too imperial, perhaps—and hence too static to move with the times. The instrumental side to its origins and its policing function ultimately made it unable to absorb critical viewpoints once the cold war entered a new phase in the 1960s. “Freedom,” said the CCF’s 1950 manifesto, “is based on the toleration of divergent opinions.”<sup>45</sup> But in reality it was bound by its own purpose of staking out the intellectual frontier in the interests of US global leadership.

## NOTES

1. Ronald Steel, *Pax Americana* (New York: Viking, 1967), 16.
2. Michael Hunt, *The American Ascendancy: How the United States Gained and Wielded Global Dominance* (Chapel Hill : University of North Carolina Press, 2007).
3. Andrew Bacevich, *American Empire: The Realities and Consequences of US Diplomacy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), 3.
4. See Tony Smith, *A Pact with the Devil: Washington’s Bid for World Supremacy and the Betrayal of the American Promise* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 53–82.
5. R. Lawrence Moore and M. Vaudagna, eds., “Introduction,” in *The American Century in Europe* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003), 2.
6. Charles Maier, *Among Empires: American Ascendancy and its Predecessors* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), 33, 45–6.
7. *Ibid.*, 66.
8. Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Game Plan: How to Conduct the US-Soviet Contest* (Boston: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1986), 16.
9. Victoria de Grazia, *Irresistible Empire: America’s Advance through Twentieth Century Europe* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2005), 4.

10. See the brief but useful discussion of US empire in Geir Lundestad, *The United States and Western Europe Since 1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 1–2.
11. Peter Coleman, *The Liberal Conspiracy* (New York: Free Press, 1989), 13.
12. See Steel, *Pax Americana*, 1–20.
13. Office of the United States Special Representative in Europe, “III: Strengthening Political Basis of Atlantic Community,” 13 March 1953, Declassified Documents Reference System (hereafter DDRS), 29–30.
14. Harold van B. Cleveland, “US Psychological Strategy in the Atlantic Community,” 10 July 1952, DDRS, 20, 24.
15. Peter Hough, *Understanding Global Security* (New York and London: Routledge, 2004), 17.
16. Bernard Bailyn, *Atlantic History: Concept and Contours* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005), 54.
17. For an interesting discussion on these points, see David Ellwood, “From the Marshall Plan to Atlanticism: Communication Strategies and Geopolitical Narratives,” in *European Community, Atlantic Community?* ed. Valerie Auburg, Gerard Bossuat, and Giles Scott-Smith (Paris: Soleb, 2008).
18. Cleveland, “US Psychological Strategy,” 12.
19. *Ibid.*, 13.
20. Committee for Information and Cultural Cooperation, “Non-Communist International Organisations,” 20 July 1959, WP(59)1, AC/52, NATO Archive, Brussels.
21. Hugh Wilford, *The Mighty Wurlitzer: How the CIA Played America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008).
22. It was only after the Ford Foundation assumed responsibility for the funding and the CCF had become the International Association for Cultural Freedom that transatlantic relations were put on the agenda. Between 1972 and 1973, a series of meetings organized by the IACF and the Aspen Institute with the title International Politics and the Future of European-American Relations took place in Bonn, Paris, London, Rome, Bonn-Bad Godesberg, and Columbia University in New York. The series produced a book: Karl Kaiser, *Europe and the United States: The Future of the Relationship* (Washington, DC: Columbia Books, 1973).
23. Maier, *Among Empires*, 33, 45–6.
24. This is essentially the argument of Volker Berghahn, *America and the Intellectual Cold Wars in Europe* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001).
25. See Giles Scott-Smith, “The Masterpieces of the Twentieth Century Festival and the Congress for Cultural Freedom: Origins and Consolidation, 1947–52,” *Intelligence and National Security* 15 (2000): 121–43.
26. On the intermingling of social science, academia, and the US state and its consequences, see *Universities and Empire: Money and Politics in the Social Sciences During the Cold War*, ed. Christopher Simpson (New York: New Press, 1998).
27. Maier, *Among Empires*, 155.
28. Giles Scott-Smith, *The Politics of Apolitical Culture: The Congress for Cultural Freedom, the CIA, and Post-War American Hegemony* (London: Routledge, 2002), 167–8.
29. *Ibid.*, 110–2.
30. Michel Foucault, “Truth and Power,” in *Power/Knowledge* (Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1980), 131; Hubert L. Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 198.



31. Quoted in Tony Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe Since 1945* (New York: Penguin, 2005), 214.
32. Edward Shils, "Remembering the Congress for Cultural Freedom," *Encounter* 75 (September 1990): 56.
33. Tony Judt, *The Burden of Responsibility: Blum, Camus, Aron and the French Twentieth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998); G. Scott-Smith, "A Meeting with Walter Laqueur: The Congress for Cultural Freedom Revisited," *De Nieuwste Tijd* 13/14 (2000): 93–104.
34. Judt, *Burden of Responsibility*, 200.
35. Giles Scott-Smith, "The Congress for Cultural Freedom, the End of Ideology and the 1955 Milan Conference: 'Defining the Parameters of Discourse,'" *Journal of Contemporary History* 37 (2002): 437–56.
36. This, for Maier, is the essence of US empire in the 1950s. See *Among Empires*, 235.
37. Irene L. Gendzier, *Development against Democracy: Manipulating Political Change in the Third World* (Hampton, CT: Tyrone, 1995).
38. Steve Batow and James Martin, *Third Way Discourse: European Ideologies in the Twentieth Century* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2003), 2, 23.
39. Hannah Arendt, "Tradition and the Modern Age," in *Between Past and Future* (London: Penguin, 2006), 9.
40. On Strasser's "third way" ideas see Deborah Kisatsky, *The United States and the European Right, 1945–1955* (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University press, 2005), 86–105.
41. This analysis is adopted from Donald Sassoon, *One Hundred Years of Socialism: The West European Left in the Twentieth Century* (New York: New Press, 1996).
42. Michael Hochgeschwender, *Freiheit in der Offensive? Der Kongreß für Kulturelle Freiheit und die Deutschen* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1998), 383–9, 466–79; Hugh Wilford, *The CIA, the British Left and the Cold War* (London: Cass, 2003), 198–201.
43. Of course, there are strong differences of opinion on both the extent of the CIA's control and the extent to which it was one of several parties involved, requiring compromise. See the stark contrast between Pierre Grémion, *Intelligence de l'anticommunisme: Le Congrès pour la liberté de la culture à Paris 1950–1975* (Paris: Fayard, 1995) which acknowledges the CIA role but considers it unnecessary for appreciating the intellectual/cultural history of the CCF; and Frances Stonor Saunders, *Who Paid the Piper?* (London: Granta, 1999), 2, which sees the CIA "positioning intellectuals and their work like chess pieces to be played in the Great Game."
44. Foucault, "Truth and Power," 131.
45. Scott-Smith, *Politics of Apolitical Culture*, 167–8.





## Part III

# At the Receiving End



## 8 The Anglo-American “Special Relationship” in the Atlantic Context During the Late 1940s and 1950s

*Kathleen Burk*

Within the context of the relationship between the two militarily strongest states in the “Atlantic community”—or more accurately, the relationship between the Western superpower and the strongest of her allies—it is not at all clear that the idea of an Atlantic community was a defining idea for the policy makers of either side. The objection could be made that ideas may not be expressed but may still be influential. The only possible response is yes, of course. But the concept of an Atlantic community is as slippery as an eel, and the linking of rhetoric and reality is equally problematic. Fundamentally, does it mean anything more than that the US was, or the US and Canada were, involved with Europe?

The concept of an Anglo-American “special relationship” is one to which great obeisance has been made in the UK and, sometimes, in the US. Yet to British policy makers, the idea has done positive harm. It is not that some such Anglo-American relationship does not exist: of course it does. But does it exist—or should it exist—at the governmental level? A special relationship is an emotional concept that can raise unrealistic expectations: If *we* have a special relationship, perhaps *you* will be more amenable to my demands. Furthermore, it is arguably an expression of weakness: Strong powers do not ordinarily need to claim such a relationship because normally they can get what they want without such an invocation. Indeed, the idea masks the fact that, during the fifteen years following World War II, Anglo-American relations were repeatedly difficult. After painful experiences, particularly in negotiating over postwar financial aid, the British rapidly learned that it was not a concept to be utilized in negotiations with the Americans.<sup>1</sup> Certainly, the people who never use the term are British diplomats because it can make them seem weak and dependent. And it is important not to seem weak because the Americans are extremely hard-headed when it comes to international affairs, as the British found time and again after 1945. But so, usually, are the British, and what they were hardheaded about for a dozen years after the end of the war was their self-perception of Great Britain as an imperial power, not merely a European power. They were a bridge between the US and Europe, between two worlds. They did not see themselves as an integral part of a unified One.

This question of an Atlantic community is difficult because it is a slippery concept. What did it mean during the early part of this period? What were these shared interests? Long-embedded democratic values? But what about the recent history of Germany and Italy? Capitalism? But what about countries having self-defined socialist economies, such as the UK and Norway? Certainly a fundamental assumption held by many was that if such a community existed, the member states would be much less inclined to fight each other. That is, it could be described as a community held together by apprehension about each other, by the need to control rogue members. There was also the idea that, with all working together, recovery and then development would take place more quickly. But the implication of all of these ideas was that the nation-state itself as an institution was no longer enough, and this was *not* self-evident to the British. Unlike every other country in Western Europe during World War II—barring the neutrals Portugal, Sweden, Switzerland, and Spain—the UK had neither been invaded nor occupied nor defeated. If being part of an Atlantic community required an institutional commitment and a concomitant surrender of sovereignty, the UK was not interested.

But there was an overarching interest that Britain shared, and this was freedom. Freedom during the war in Europe had meant freedom from German and Italian domination. But Germany's defeat had opened up a power vacuum in Central Europe, and the question was, who would fill it? The obvious candidate was the USSR. Freedom for the Western European states then became freedom from the domination of the Soviet Union, and with this the UK could whole-heartedly agree. Indeed, from 1944 the UK believed, and tried in vain to convince the US, that the USSR was the country to fear in the future. Therefore, for Great Britain, establishing an Atlantic community translated into convincing the US to take some continuing responsibility for defending Western Europe from the Soviet Union.

What about the US government? In the first years after the end of the war, both the US government and population really wanted as little as possible to do with Europe beyond her duties as an occupying power: It is worth remembering that overall, during the year from the spring of 1945, American military forces were demobilized from a total of 12.3 million to 1.5 million. The expectation of most Americans was that they would withdraw from Europe and return home, and there were a number of "I Wanna Go Home" and "Bring Daddy Back Home" clubs.<sup>2</sup> Europe was the responsibility of the Europeans. It would be very surprising indeed if there was much hard evidence of serious consideration of a concept of an Atlantic community by American policy makers. For one thing, Europe was not the whole of the world for the US, and therefore there could not be only one "community" to which the US should devote her time. Latin America was not a problem, but what about the Far East? Japan was under control, but the establishment of the Communist Party's control of China in 1949 with the setting-up of the People's Republic, followed by the Korean War

in 1950, meant that this part of the world was of overwhelming concern to the US. The Atlantic world did not have the US government's undivided attention.

But there was another important factor relevant to a community: the question of status or hierarchy, of equality. This was an important consideration for the Europeans, but for the Americans, this was not an issue since it would not and could not happen. It was always "we, the US" and "you Europeans." Given the origins of the US as made up of immigrants from Europe and its tradition of separation from Europe—and given the vast disparity in power—it would have been amazing had it been otherwise.

But within this group of European countries, one did by general agreement have a special place during the decade after the end of the war, and this was Great Britain. There were a number of reasons for this. First of all, she had been a member of the so-called Grand Alliance of the US, the UK, and the USSR, and until mid-1943, she had had more forces in the field than the US. Thus, her contribution had not been wholly unequal. Second, she had suffered greatly from the war: not only the loss of life, not only the substantial damage suffered by her cities, not only the destruction of much of her manufacturing capacity; overall, she had lost one-quarter of her total prewar wealth. Nevertheless, unlike many of the continental European countries, her institutions remained intact, her economy functioned, her society remained united, and her self-confidence as a country was largely unabated.

Third, she retained for nearly three decades her position as an imperial power. From the Empire she earned dollars that were vital to her financial position, which was weak in any case; the Malaysian tin and rubber sold to the US and Canada, for example, were significant dollars-earners for her. But the Empire also made her valuable to the US. There was a strong streak of irony here. The new appreciation of the value of the British Empire was one of the most spectacular changes in American perceptions of the world and of the UK's place in it to have occurred since the American Revolution. The US had spent half a century trying to get the UK to divest herself of her colonies. During the war, President Roosevelt himself had made several such attempts, suggesting, for example, that the UK hand back Hong Kong as a "gesture of good will"; the British wanted to know what gesture the US was going to make. Indeed, the exchanges could get a bit heated. In January 1945 President Roosevelt nudged British Colonial Secretary Oliver Stanley, saying that "I do not want to be unkind or rude to the British, but in 1841 [*sic*], when you acquired Hong Kong, you did not acquire it by purchase." Stanley snapped back, "Let me see, Mr. President, that was about the time of the Mexican War, wasn't it?"<sup>3</sup> Roosevelt also told Churchill early in 1942 that he had given "much thought" to India, since it was "an untenable burden" to Britain; he suggested a transition government, setting out its structures and duties whilst Churchill puffed, angrily but silently, on his cigar.<sup>4</sup> Now the Empire, which constituted over 20 percent of the world's

surface and more than 25 percent of its population, took on a new significance for the US. As the Department of State wrote in June 1948, during very difficult negotiations over the bilateral treaty with the UK for her part of the Marshall Plan,

British friendship and cooperation is not only desirable in the United Nations and in dealing with the Soviets; it is necessary for American defense. The United Kingdom, the Dominions, Colonies and Dependencies, form a world-wide network of strategically located territories of great military value, which have served as defensive outposts and as bridgeheads for operations. Subject to our general policy of favoring eventual self-determination of peoples, it is our objective that the integrity of this area be maintained.<sup>5</sup>

Or, as it was later put by Frank Wisner, head of covert operations for the CIA, “whenever there is somewhere we want to destabilize, the British have an island nearby.”<sup>6</sup>

Fourth, the UK was still a military power with an army and the Royal Navy. But not only did the UK provide occupying forces, it provided a home for the United States’ forward line of defense. By the Spatz-Tedder Agreement in 1946, the UK agreed to prepare five bases in East Anglia—Lakenheath, Mildenhall, Scampton, Marham, and Bassingbourn—for use by American B-29 Superfortresses in time of crisis. American long-range bombers such as the B-36 (with a range of 4,000 nautical miles) only began to appear in 1951; before then, the US was desperate for air bases close to the USSR. Atom bomb facilities in the UK were ready by 1947 (atomic weapons would first arrive in July 1950, a month after the outbreak of the Korean War), whilst with the beginning of the Berlin blockade in June 1948, three groups of heavy bombers arrived as a show of strength.<sup>7</sup> These bombers were intended by the US to be a permanent fixture in Britain: As US Secretary of Defense James Forrestal wrote in his diary on 15 July 1948, “We have the opportunity *now* of sending these planes, and once sent they would become somewhat of an accepted fixture, whereas a deterioration of the situation in Europe might lead to a condition of mind under which the British would be compelled to reverse their present attitude.”<sup>8</sup> Indeed, by 1950, the American contingency of a “hot” war with the USSR required that over one-half of their air strikes on the USSR be launched from Great Britain, the United States’ “unsinkable aircraft carrier.”<sup>9</sup>

And fifth, the two countries were used to working together. The military alliance during the war was probably unrivalled in history. There was the Combined Chiefs of Staff and the agreement that in any theater of war where they both fought, all military forces would be put under the command of the country with the larger force; this was unprecedented.<sup>10</sup> Then there were all of the combined boards, both for economic warfare and for the supplies to civilians. All of these combined organizations had their



headquarters in Washington, and according to one of the official historians, "the overseas administration . . . assumed such proportions as almost to suggest that the British government was functioning in duplicate on both sides of the Atlantic."<sup>11</sup> In short, thousands of Britons and Americans were used to working together, knew each other's families, and on the whole trusted each other. As one diplomat put it, there was "an integration of effort of truly astonishing proportions between two completely independent countries."<sup>12</sup> This close relationship carried on for some years, and certainly whilst these veterans continued in positions of responsibility. As just one example, the Combined Chiefs of Staff continued to work together after the war until the joint effort was subsumed into NATO.

The point here is that for the US, the UK provided capabilities that the US needed and that no other European country could provide during the 1940s and 1950s. As a result, the US and the UK were partners, senior and junior partners of course, but still with a relationship that differed from those which the US had with the continental European countries. For the UK, this corroborated her own conviction of her position in the Atlantic world: She had a special connection with the US, and she was not just another European country. This was a matter of more than simple pride: The UK government believed that it was a matter of the safety of the realm. Continental European countries seem unable to grasp that for Great Britain, Europe has meant danger and war. The idea of Europe as a good thing, beyond the eighteenth-century Grand Tour and as a trading partner, was rather underdeveloped. This perception of Europe was starkly expressed in January 1949 by a group of senior British civil servants:

Since post-war planning began, our policy has been to secure close political, military and economic co-operation with the U.S.A. This has been necessary to get economic aid. It will always be decisive for our security . . . We hope to secure a special relationship with (the) U.S.A. and Canada . . . for in the last resort we cannot rely upon the European countries.<sup>13</sup>

As for the US, she also wanted a close Anglo-American relationship, but what she wanted with regard to Europe was specific: She wanted the UK to become part of Europe and to lead it in the direction that the US wished. The best example of this was the Marshall Plan, named after the Secretary of State who first publicly announced it, George C. Marshall. The Marshall Plan—or European Recovery Program, to give it its proper title—was the episode during which the US granted or loaned some \$13 billion over four years to sixteen European countries; multiply that figure by at least ten to conceptualize its worth in today's money. The US required a strong and integrated European economy to which American goods, both agricultural and industrial, could be exported; American strategic policy required a strong and united Western Europe to provide a barrier against further

Soviet expansion westward; and the US needed other liberal, capitalist democracies to exist lest the US, through needing to militarize against non-democracies, cease to be one herself. It was, therefore, a defining episode in the cold war, during which the continent was split along the geopolitical line that remained in place until 1989, and it was a defining episode in the early history of European integration.

What did the US want from the Europeans, what did she want from Great Britain, and to what extent did the UK comply? First of all, what the US wanted from the Europeans was unity. The formative idea of the Marshall Plan was that the European countries would decide together what they needed for recovery, with a premium on working together; their program would then be presented to the Economic Cooperation Administration, which would look it over and then ask Congress to appropriate the necessary funds; and finally, the goods from American farmers and manufacturers would be purchased and shipped to the Europeans. It all went wrong at the outset, primarily because the Europeans continued to act as Frenchmen or Italians or Dutch, not as “Europeans.” In disgust, the Americans took over the initial allocation of goods.<sup>14</sup> This was an early postwar example of the American approach to allies: She spoke of cooperation, but she meant control.

They then forced the Europeans to work together at the cost of losing the funds: the means was the Organisation of European Economic Cooperation, the OEEC. This was to be a supranational institution, not one in which the members spoke for individual countries. Fundamentally, the Americans wanted the Europeans to turn themselves into a United States of Europe—the term was sometimes used in American discussions—since it seemed self-evident that the source of American prosperity was economic and financial unity. What they wanted was for the Europeans to accept and implement closer integration, first economic and then political. The OEEC was to be the means through which it would be done. The continental Europeans found the idea of integration with a partial surrender of their sovereignty difficult to accept, and it took several years. Some countries, such as Britain and Norway, never accepted it during this period. In spite of American efforts, the OEEC never became the supranational organization guiding the integration of Europe: rather, it mutated into the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), adding the US, Canada, Japan, and other non-European members and carrying out useful economic research functions.<sup>15</sup> But the European Payments Union of 1950, which facilitated free trade amongst the European countries themselves, was a big step.<sup>16</sup> Even bigger was the European Coal and Steel Community of 1951, strongly supported by the Americans, as was the establishment of the European Economic Community, or EEC, in 1957. The main theme that arises from this is the role of the US as the begetter of an integrated Europe. Without American pressure and economic support, it likely would have taken decades longer to accomplish.

What role did the US expect Britain to play in this? Bluntly, she expected her to become part of Europe, and she expected her to lead it. There is no doubt that, had the UK decided it was important to her future to focus her attention on Europe rather than on remaining an imperial power, she would indeed have led Europe. Other European countries, although possibly not France, looked to Britain for this leadership. The question then becomes, to what extent did the UK fulfill American expectations? The answer is, not very much. Over the years of the Marshall Plan, the UK repeatedly fought off attempts by the US to convince her to integrate with Europe. One reason was economic, the fear that various American plans would undermine the pound sterling, already a weak currency. Another was the fear that European economic weakness would drag Britain down; besides, at that point, Britain was engaged in more trade with the sterling area, especially with the Empire and the Commonwealth, than with Europe. But beyond this was the fear of future diminution of her world role. It must be emphasized that the British government believed it was imperative that the US consider her a partner, even if only a junior one, to be consulted and listened to, and that this would be undermined if Britain was to be slotted in as merely another European power. It was the UK's basic need for US economic and military support that motivated the British in the negotiations for Marshall Plan aid; and it was this basic distrust of Europe that, in the final analysis, made Britain unable to go as far as the US desired, and nearly required, toward European integration. The US government in general understood this, a major reason why the US never pushed the UK too far. The American sense of its own need for the UK blunted the use of leverage, due to the Marshall Plan aid, that it believed it possessed. As final proof, in order to ensure that Britain could continue her involvement in foreign affairs as the United States' main ally, she received the largest tranche of Marshall Plan aid.<sup>17</sup>

The American assumption was that she would provide economic and financial aid to shore up Western Europe, but not military aid. But British Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin was convinced that grave danger threatened without an American military commitment as well. He worked for this from 1946 onward, but without much success: Entering into a peacetime alliance would overturn the traditional American approach to world affairs. But it was the February 1948 Czechoslovak communist coup which, together with other Soviet threats, encouraged the US to seriously enter into negotiations for a West European military alliance. Bevin was, in fact, the midwife of NATO, the institution that committed the US to the military containment of the USSR on the European continent.<sup>18</sup>

On 15 December 1947, the London Conference of Foreign Ministers' talks on the future of Germany broke up in disarray. Over the next several weeks, Bevin became even more convinced that it was urgently necessary to provide some security for Western Europe. But he recognized that there had to be some effective collaboration amongst the European countries themselves before approaching the Americans for solid support. On 4 March

1947, Britain and France signed the Treaty of Dunkirk, which bound them together in an alliance for fifty years against the revival of German aggression. Then, in the early spring of 1948, Bevin entered into talks with the three Benelux powers. His idea was that once there was a solid defense core in Western Europe, they might develop the system and invite other states to join, such as Italy and other Mediterranean countries and Scandinavia. Bevin then let the Americans know about the discussions and received encouragement from Marshall.<sup>19</sup>

This was followed by several discouraging weeks for Bevin and others who supported the project. There was a growing division of opinion in the State Department between those who supported American involvement and those who did not. The two most important officials who were against it were, interestingly, the two resident Soviet specialists George Kennan and Charles Bohlen: They feared that the result would be a Europe split into two for the foreseeable future and a USSR permanently alienated from the Western powers. Furthermore, France was dragging her feet. But the Czech coup in February 1948 provided a strong impetus, as did the rumor that the USSR planned to demand that Norway sign a treaty of friendship along the lines of the one that the Finns had had to sign. Negotiations accelerated, and on 17 March 1948, the Brussels Pact was signed, but with the USSR rather than Germany as the enemy. The same day, President Truman endorsed it in the same speech to Congress in which he called for the first American peacetime conscription and stated that American troops would remain “until peace is secured in Europe.”<sup>20</sup>

Bevin, however, wanted a formal American commitment. Given the news from Norway, he proposed to the Americans talks to discuss West European security. A few hours after receiving Bevin’s message, Marshall replied that “we are prepared to proceed at once in the joint discussions on the establishment of an Atlantic security system.” He then suggested the prompt arrival of the British for discussions early the following week. This was the signal for the beginning of negotiations. Negotiations, in fact, lasted until 24 December 1948, when a draft treaty was produced. Then came one of the most difficult parts of the task: winning the consent of the Senate. The Europeans had asked the US to make a profound departure from its traditional custom of no entangling alliances. Indeed, the Constitution might prevent it: This gave Congress the responsibility for declaring war, but the whole point of the treaty was the principle that if one member were to be attacked, all of the others would automatically come to its aid—like the Three Musketeers’ motto “one for all and all for one.” Words were found that removed the issue of automatic response and placated the Constitution: “individually and in concert with other Powers, such action as it deems necessary.” The treaty that set up the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) was signed in Washington on 4 April 1949 and ratified by the Senate in July.<sup>21</sup>

NATO is interesting for several reasons. First of all, most of those who talked publicly about an Atlantic community of some sort had little power,

even of persuasion; in this case, it was *policy makers* who took the concept and did something with it. Second, the whole idea was a British proposal to which the US had to react, and the British called it a proposal for an Atlantic Pact. This had resonance since they could all recall the Battle of the Atlantic from 1939 to 1943. An Atlantic Pact made it clear that the safety and defense of the US was closely aligned with that of the UK and Europe in a way that something called a European Defence Pact, for example, never could. Third, it is a good example of a fundamental British foreign-policy requirement, which was—and is—to co-opt American power to support British interests. Indeed, it was General Lord Ismay, the Chief of the General Staff, who pronounced the dictum that the purpose of NATO was to keep the Americans in, the Germans down, and the Russians out. And fourth, it has always been an instrument of American control, in the same way as is the International Monetary Fund, for example. The British were so relieved by the American commitment that they supported this, but the control over cooperation assumption—conviction?—repeatedly manifested itself, whether over de Gaulle and nuclear weapons<sup>22</sup> or Kissinger's expectations of full-hearted European support during the 1973–74 OPEC crisis and the Yom Kippur War.<sup>23</sup> When President George H. W. Bush visited Europe in 1991, after the cold war as such had ended with the demise of the Soviet Union, a journalist asked him in front of the television cameras, what was now the point of NATO? He was startled, he stammered, and he had no answer. The only answer was control—and the expectation of being able to use it outside of the NATO area. As NATO intervention in Bosnia and Afghanistan has demonstrated, this has had mixed results: Sometimes it works, and sometimes it does not.

It may seem slightly curious that Great Britain was very reluctant to become involved in economic containment but was the leader in organizing military containment. The answer is simple: As the price for Marshall Plan aid, the US tried to impose an organization that would necessitate a surrender of some sovereignty to a supranational organization; on the other hand, NATO was an organization of sovereign states. It is also mildly thought-provoking that the reaction of the US was exactly opposite. When supplying Marshall Plan aid, it enhanced its position as the leading sovereign state; however, being part of NATO would also require it to surrender a tiny bit of sovereignty, and it was the decision to do so that had been almost impossible for the Congress to take.

NATO was the only organization of which Britain was a part that openly had an Atlantic orientation as opposed to a purely European one. For her, what was of overwhelming importance was the relationship with the US, and her links with the Western European countries as Europe weakened during the 1950s as their paths diverged. The US, for her part never stopped wanting the UK to become part of Europe and to play a bigger role within Europe: She tended to assume that if Britain were part of Europe, she would act as the US wanted her to do. During the 1950s,

this assumption was never tested because Britain never took the leap. Fundamentally, she believed that she was an Atlantic power whose links with the US were more natural than any possible links with Europe could ever be. But she was *not*, as the US was not, part of an Atlantic “community”: rather, Britain saw herself as one half of a close Anglo-American relationship, a *much* safer proposition.

## NOTES

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7. Aldrich, *Hidden Hand*, 207, 216; Burk, *Old World, New World*, 595.
8. “Summary of Considerations Affecting the Decision to Send B-29 Bombers to England,” in *The Forrestal Diaries: The Inner History of the Cold War*, ed. Walter Millis (London: Cassell, 1952), 429–30; Duncan Campbell, *The Unsinkable Aircraft Carrier* (London: Michael Joseph, 1984), 32.
9. Aldrich, *Hidden Hand*, 207; Campbell, *The Unsinkable Aircraft Carrier*, 28.
10. Mark A. Stoler, *Allies in War: Britain and America against the Axis Powers 1940–1945* (London: Hodder Arnold, 2005), 42–43.
11. H. Duncan Hall, *History of the Second World War: North American Supply* (London: HMSO / Longmans, Green, 1955), 60.
12. Paul Gore-Booth, *With Great Truth and Respect* (London: Constable, 1974), 121.
13. Sir Richard Clarke, “Policy Towards Europe,” 5 January 1949, in *Anglo-American Economic Collaboration in War and Peace, 1942–1949*, ed. Sir Alec Cairncross (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), 208. Those in attendance were Sir Edward Bridges, Permanent Secretary to the Treasury; Sir Henry Wilson-Smith, head of the Overseas Finance Division; F. G. Lee (later Sir Frank Lee, Permanent Secretary to the Treasury); D. H. F. Rickett (later Sir Denis Rickett, Second Permanent Secretary to the Treasury); R. W. B. Clarke (later Sir Richard [Otto] Clarke, Second Permanent Secretary to the Treasury); Roger Makins, Deputy Under-Secretary of State at the Foreign Office (later British Ambassador to the USA and Lord Sherfield); Sir Percivale Liesching, Under-Secretary of State at the Dominions Office; Sir John Henry Woods, Permanent Secretary to the Board of Trade; and Sir Edwin (later Lord) Plowden, Chief Planning Officer of HMG (the British government).



14. Acting Secretary of State (Robert Lovett) to Diplomatic Representatives Accredited to Countries Participating in the Conference of European Economic Cooperation and to the United States Political Adviser for Germany (Robert Murphy), 7 September 1947; *Ibid.*; Marshall to Lewis Douglas, 8 September 1947; Douglas to Marshall, 9 September 1947; the Ambassador in France (Jefferson Caffery) to Marshall, 11 Sept. 1947; Caffery to Marshall, 12 September 1947; Douglas to Marshall, 12 September 1947; and Lovett to Douglas, 13 September 1947, all in *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1947*, vol. 3, *The British Commonwealth; Europe* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1972), 412–31. Alex Danchev, *Oliver Franks: Founding Father* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), chapter 4.
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## 9 When the High Seas Finally Reached Italian Shores

### Italy's Inclusion in the Atlantic *Communitas*

*Mario Del Pero*

It is common in scholarly as well as public discourse to present Italy's inclusion in the post-World War II Western order as a "choice"—as the "international choice" (*scelta internazionale*) of Italy. In many regards, this definition is correct. A "choice" it certainly was, although not one that was entirely free and independent. Italian elites and a majority of the public agreed with this choice, which was obstinately pursued by its two main sponsors: Italian Foreign Minister Carlo Sforza and Prime Minister Alcide De Gasperi.<sup>1</sup>

This "international choice" was neither easy nor inevitable. For the post-Fascist ruling class it was difficult to abandon the nationalist *topoi* and "third force" aspirations that still permeated the culture and mentality of Italy's political elites, including De Gasperi himself.<sup>2</sup> The "choice" was made with hesitation and was not devoid of typical ambiguities of Italian foreign policy. In the months preceding the signing of the Atlantic Pact, Italy's diplomacy wavered, irritating the future Atlantic allies. Domestic factors and the widespread hostility to anything resembling a new militarism induced De Gasperi to act cautiously. The legacy and horrors of World War II made the idea of immediately joining a new defensive system most unattractive. Indeed, pacifism and antimilitarism were destined to become powerful factors in Italy's political and cultural life, conditioning Italian foreign policy for the next sixty years, as was made evident during the wars in Korea and Vietnam, the frequent discussions over Italian rearmament, the Euro-missiles debate, and most recently, the military interventions in the Balkans.<sup>3</sup>

Nevertheless, between 1948 and 1949, a choice was made. Various factors converged in determining it: the aforementioned role of Sforza and De Gasperi; the pressures exercised by various diplomats (such as the resourceful Italian Ambassador to Washington from 1945 to 1955, Alberto Tarchiani); and some astute tactical moves toward the end.<sup>4</sup>

It is therefore correct to present the issue as a "choice": a choice that was Western, Atlantic, and anti-Soviet. Yet by focusing primarily, or exclusively, on the choice and its laborious maturation, we get a very partial and insufficient explanation of the journey that brought Italy within the Atlantic sphere.

This “international choice” could only take place because there had already been a previous “acceptance” of Italy within the as-yet embryonic Atlantic sphere. The Italian “invitation” to the Western powers and the United States in particular—to use the famous slogan coined by the Norwegian historian Geir Lundestad—would have never been possible had a willingness to accept it not been clear.<sup>5</sup> This willingness, as we now know, was originally absent. From this perspective, the episode of the Brussels Pact, which launched the process that led to the Atlantic Alliance, is revealing. As many Italian scholars have correctly underlined, De Gasperi expressed little interest in the pact. But the five powers that ratified it were themselves not particularly interested in Italy’s participation and outright hostile to it in some cases.<sup>6</sup>

The fact that the crucial question was the “acceptance” of Italy by the Atlantic allies rather than an Italian “choice” became evident during the negotiations—the Washington Talks—that led to the Atlantic Pact. Italy’s gradual abandonment of residual and unrealistic alternatives, such as opting for armed neutrality guaranteed by the United States, developed primarily as a consequence of exogenous pressures. Among them, we can mention, in increasing order of importance: (i) a change in the position of the Vatican, epitomized by Pope Pius XII’s famous Christmas 1948 radio message, wherein the more rigid attitude toward communism was matched by the Vatican’s “noncontrariety” to the possibility that military alliances including Italy could be formed; (ii) the position adopted by France during the Washington Talks, wherein Paris supported the immediate inclusion of Italy in the alliance in order to mitigate its Atlantic/Anglo-Saxon character and shift its barycenter to the Mediterranean, including the Algerian departments of France; (iii) the US position, characterized by a gradual acceptance of Italy’s presence in the Alliance, which was far from predetermined and not only as a consequence of French pressures.<sup>7</sup>

The main problem is thus to understand why the United States accepted Italy among the founding members of the Atlantic Alliance despite general opposition both within the Truman administration and in Congress. Such opposition was almost instinctive and emotional in the case of President Harry Truman and many important senators, including the chairman of the Committee on Foreign Relations, Tom Connally (D-TX). Resistance, however, was also justified in geopolitical and pseudoscientific terms by George Kennan, an influential figure whose position within the administration was clearly on the wane, but who nonetheless remained the director of the State Department’s Policy Planning Staff and was one of the most authoritative experts on foreign policy.<sup>8</sup>

Why then did the United States choose to admit Italy into the Alliance? The country was not considered strategically vital, despite the insistence of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to give greater importance to the Mediterranean. According to traditional geopolitical parameters, Italy was still marginal and peripheral to the real core of the incipient cold war: continental Europe, whose epicenter was Germany. Finally, and more important, Italy

was not (and could not be considered) “Atlantic”; not only was this geographically self-evident, but it was also politically and culturally so. Italy’s “non-Atlanticism” was strongly stressed by Kennan and also underlined by Secretary of State Dean Acheson. The long memorandum Acheson sent to Truman, in which he discussed the pros and cons of Italy’s admission to the Alliance, constitutes one of the most extraordinary examples of the prejudices and stereotypes permeating Washington’s interpretations of Italian politics, culture, and history. In enumerating the arguments against the inclusion of Italy in the North Atlantic Alliance, Acheson mentioned not only the fact that Italy was not “physically on the North Atlantic Ocean,” but that it had also proved to be “an ineffectual and undependable ally” that “switched sides in both wars” and who “in 1940 stabbed France and the UK in the back.”<sup>9</sup>

Why then, despite these assumptions, was Italy “Atlanticized”? How could the high seas suddenly wash the Italian shores? It is possible to give two interdependent explanations for the US’s decision to accept Italy into the Atlantic Alliance. The first has to do with the profound redefinition of the basic assumptions of US foreign and security policy. The second stems from the “communitarian” definition of the Atlantic Alliance expressed in Washington. On this, Acheson—as well as the very influential US representative at the Washington Talks, the State Department’s Director for European Affairs, John Hickerson—believed it necessary and possible to give life to a real *communitas*. A similar assumption even informed Kennan’s view, who also believed that a real community had to be formed. His key criticism was not whether a *communitas* should be created, but the form it was taking as it developed into an overextended and heterogeneous group—a nonorganic community, destined to include actors who, like Italy, could not be properly considered Atlantic.<sup>10</sup>

The redefinition of the basic contours of US foreign policy was the consequence of a holistic view of security in terms of what it was and how it was to be ensured that had matured during the 1930s and through World War II. Such a view was based on the explicit, and in many ways neo-Wilsonian, recognition of the interdependence of the international system and the impossibility of separating the different theaters and problems of international politics.<sup>11</sup>

The subsequent cold war completed this process. Washington presented and perceived the Soviet-Communist challenge as global and absolute, both ideologically and geopolitically. For the United States, the USSR projected an alternative, although equally universal in ambition, teleology of modernization. The United States feared a cascade process wherein the spread of communism and Soviet influence would be facilitated and catalyzed by the objective interdependence of the different parts of the system. The result could be a domino effect or a global infection (to use some of the most recurrent metaphors of those years), capable of transforming the international system and threatening not just the security of the United States but its very

essence. In the absence of preventive actions, the United States would have been obliged to mobilize and “prussianize” its society and economy to face the challenge and to preserve a liberty that was now considered indivisible in a world that could not be “half free and half slave.”<sup>12</sup>

This holistic view of American security laid the foundation for a globalist and interventionist approach to international matters. “Interpreted broadly the American frontier could be everywhere and anywhere,” historian Frank Ninkovich has underlined. “Strategically the world was one . . . saving the nation required the salvation of everybody else . . . national identity was tightly linked to a pattern of global history.”<sup>13</sup>

The consequence of this was the implementation of a “uniworld” model of foreign policy. Conceptually antithetical to the homeostatic balance of power of the realist tradition, such an approach tended to uniform the parts to the whole, specifics to generalities, peculiarity to the totality now represented by the US/USSR bipolar antagonism. Specificities—and Italy was a very specific political and cultural reality—ceased to be such once included in the Manichean and homologating cold war framework. Strategic subordination, which characterized Italy in 1948, also disappeared in a situation wherein the distinction between the center and the periphery was less apparent and, furthermore, wherein the marginal began to assume greater centrality.

The key concept was that of credibility. The cold war was a total and absolute conflict as never seen before. However, the instruments through which the conflict was waged were mostly symbolic. Italy, marginal and peripheral from an orthodox realist perspective, rapidly acquired a crucial symbolic importance. To “lose Italy,” as US Ambassador to Rome Clare Boothe Luce would later claim in 1954, meant opening a potential black hole that could suck in the rest of Europe. As Hickerson constantly argued, excluding Italy from the Atlantic community would give an unequivocal signal of US disinterest for the fate of Italy, thus weakening the De Gasperi government and pushing the country toward neutralism or communism. Such an outcome could question the credibility of the US commitment to contain the Soviet Union and weaken the confidence of pro-Atlantic Western European elites, thus reversing previous US successes, in particular with the Marshall Plan. The part (Italy) was thus strictly connected to the whole (the West and, consequently, the world). If infected, Italy, by virtue of its simple territorial contiguity with other European countries, could have spread the contagion. “Like apples in a barrel infected by one rotten one,” the then undersecretary of state Dean Acheson argued in 1947, describing the situation in the Mediterranean, “the corruption of Greece would infect Iran and all to the east. It would also carry the infection to Africa through Asia Minor and Egypt, and to Europe through Italy and France, already threatened by the strongest Communist parties in Western Europe.” As maintained by Italian historian Alessandro Brogi, the United States deemed it necessary to control Italy and to anchor it to the Atlantic

security system in order to “avoid a chain reaction, a domino involving the entire Western Europe.”<sup>14</sup>

From this perspective, the Atlantic Alliance and even US military aid to Europe initially had a primarily symbolic function. Rather than sterile instruments of a policy unable to deal with the power dimension of international relations, they were parts of a strategy aimed at facing a Soviet threat that was more political and psychological than military. They symbolized the US's decision to stay in Europe and accept the “invitation” of its allies, and not the aspiration to alter a continental equilibrium of power that still favored Moscow. The structural and organizational element of the Alliance was yet to come with the inception of the Korean war.<sup>15</sup>

This aspect—the symbolic over the military significance of the Atlantic Pact—was strictly connected to the second factor of the US's decision to accept Italy among the founding members of the Alliance: the idea that the founding Alliance had to be a real community. In the United States, both supporters and critics of the Alliance justified their position through assertions of whether what was taking shape was a real *communitas*.

Those who opposed the creation of the Atlantic Alliance often stressed the supposed incompatibility of its original members. Kennan—to cite the most famous example—reckoned there should be a historical and spiritual commonality among members of the Alliance and initially considered strict Anglophile nations like Canada, the United States, and the United Kingdom. A real community, Kennan argued, had to be a “political, economic and spiritual union,” not a military one. True alliances had to be “based upon [a] real community of interests,” and not on “abstract formalism.” Furthermore, as historian John Harper has convincingly argued, Kennan believed that the Atlantic Pact offered the USSR “the external threat” it needed “to shore up its position in Eastern Europe and at home.”<sup>16</sup>

Liberal critics of the Alliance also justified their position by claiming that the Alliance was not a real *communitas*. More than the military nature of the Alliance, they concentrated on its vague and all-embracing character. From this perspective, the geographical element (namely, the fact that Italy literally was not an Atlantic country) also rapidly acquired a metaphorical meaning. Stressing geographic incongruence allowed critics to emphasize Italy's political and cultural “otherness,” and consequently, to place the country outside the perimeter of the Atlantic West. According to the *Washington Post*, accepting Italy into the Alliance (as well as Portugal, another “other country” despite its obvious Atlantic position) created a “deformed and misshaped form of the Pact” and frustrated hopes that the community could rapidly “evolve into a *nuclear union of like minded nations*.”<sup>17</sup>

The incontrovertible demonstration of Italian diversity was offered by the presence in the country of the largest West European Communist Party, the Partito Comunista Italiano (PCI). In theory, once rearmed and militarily integrated into the structure of the Alliance, Italy could “legally” (i.e., via a

regular electoral process) switch sides and join the enemy camp. This possibility was mentioned a few years later by US Ambassador to Rome Clare Boothe Luce to justify her request to outlaw the PCI. But a similar objection was also advanced during the congressional hearings on the Atlantic Pact by the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations. Senator Arthur Vivian Watkins (R-UT) asked Army Chief of Staff General Omar Bradley to indicate the possible “risks” to the United States in rearming countries, such as Italy and France, whose future allegiance to the anticommunist bloc could not be taken for granted. Senator Forrest Donnell (R-MO) criticized the fact that the treaty had no provisions for expelling one of the members of the pact if it became “Communist.”<sup>18</sup>

The responses to these criticisms tended to accept their basic premise: namely, that the nascent community had to be a sort of Weberian *communitas* founded upon a positive property, a unifying common denominator, that united its different members. According to this approach, there had to be a preexisting element of belonging—an existential commonality—shared by all the members of the new Alliance.

Many thus justified the creation of the Alliance and the inclusion of Italy by stressing the common political, cultural, and civilization matrices of its founding members. With her usual bombastic rhetoric, *New York Times* journalist Anne O’Hare McCormick presented the creation of the Atlantic Community as “the rise of the New Atlantis . . . It is as if the lost continent of Atlantis had suddenly emerged from the sea that covered it and become solid ground again.” “Once evoked, Atlantica is not likely to sink into the sea again,” she commented, before adding that the new community was “a nucleus which could grow into anything.” Dean Acheson was no less grandiloquent: “It is important to keep in mind that the really successful national and international institutions are those that recognize and express underlying realities.” The new Secretary of State continued:

The North Atlantic Community of nations is such a reality. It is based on the affinity and natural identity of interests of the North Atlantic Powers. The North Atlantic Treaty which will formally unite them is the product of at least 350 years of history and perhaps more . . . it is a community . . . connected with Western Europe by common institutions and moral and ethical beliefs. Similarities of this kind are not superficial, but fundamental. They are the strongest kind of ties, because they are based on moral conviction, on acceptance of the same values in life.

Discussing the matter with the president, Acheson explicitly mentioned “race, tradition and civilization” as common denominators of the alliance’s members. For Senator Alexander Wiley (R-WI), the Atlantic Pact symbolized a “spiritual” awakening in the West; while more prosaically, the US representative at the United Nations, Warren Austin, identified the



preexisting commonalities of its members in the trade, cultural, and touristic interactions between the two sides of the Atlantic.<sup>19</sup>

However, the true foundational element of the Atlantic community was different from, if not opposite to, those used to justify its creation. As Italian political philosopher Roberto Esposito has argued, “the *minus* that a *communitas* shares is not a property or a belonging. It is not what you have, but, on the contrary, a debt, a pledge, a gift to be given” or even a “lacking.”<sup>20</sup> The original members of the Atlantic community did not share a preexisting “plus,” as many tried to claim, but a much more coeval “minus”: an absence, a weakness. Such a deficit limited their autonomous subjectivity as states and reduced their independence and sovereignty.

This absence/weakness was obviously represented by the incapacity of individual members to provide for their own security—by their inability to be immune from the potential communist contagion (the European countries) or to avert the risk of transforming into a garrison state to face the challenge (the United States). In spite of the proclamations and abundant use of Western civilization rhetoric, what the original members of the Atlantic Alliance shared was a lack of security, primarily political and psychological. Not accidentally, it was the Portuguese Foreign Minister José Caeiro Da Matta—the representative of the country that least embodied the liberal and democratic values that the new *communitas* was supposed to exemplify—who underlined with brutal frankness the real matrix of the Pact: the menace to Europe from “the greatest and most dangerous mental epidemic of all times.”<sup>21</sup>

When we look at it from this perspective, we understand how Italy's anomaly was the real reason behind the US decision to accept it into the Alliance. Italy's weakness and vulnerability represented the most important assets on which Sforza and De Gasperi could rely. Indeed, Italy suffered from a surplus of fragility when compared to the other countries that signed the pact. It was a nation where a large Communist Party could theoretically win elections and gain power. But it was also a country that had suffered the humiliation of a punitive peace treaty from World War II, which greatly limited its ability to contribute to the common Atlantic cause.

Italy's deficiencies offered the excuse Acheson and Hickerson needed to justify its inclusion in the Alliance. Because of such vulnerabilities, an eventual exclusion would have weakened the government of Alcide De Gasperi, demoralized other pro-Western groups, and facilitated a spread of the Communist influence (possibly through the “Trojan horse” of neutralism). At that point, a communist or neutral Italy could potentially trigger the continental domino that Acheson so dreaded. Italy's hyperweakness and unreliability was also stressed by those opposing its participation of the country. The perplexities of Kennan and several important senators were based upon the assumption that bringing Italy's vulnerability within the Alliance meant radically weakening the effectiveness of the new institution. Injecting the virus into the community would exhaust its immunological

barriers instead of strengthening it, thus corroding the healthy body of the West from within.<sup>22</sup>

Initially, then, the Atlantic community emerged as a sum of weakness and deficiency. The different parts that composed the community gathered to guarantee the immunity that alone they no longer enjoyed. In order to achieve this goal, however, they had to transform themselves. In other words, they had to change their very natures to reobtain, at least partially, lost sovereignty. The new *communitas* thus expressed a fundamental contradiction: Its members emancipated themselves but only by accepting a new bond. The community offered its affiliates what we could define as an “emancipative bond.” Such a bond emancipated and transformed, while at the same time it limited and constrained.

This contradiction emerged clearly in the case of the Atlantic community and, even more so, with the admission of Italy. Thanks to the security the community guaranteed them, members were able to reacquire a crucial element of their sovereignty. Indeed, it is the fundamental element on which state sovereignty has historically been founded: the capacity of a state to defend and preserve its borders from external enemies, which in the case of Italy was also supported by domestic “fifth columns.” The reacquisition of such sovereignty, however, is ensured through a cession of sovereignty. In the Atlantic Pact, this sovereignty exchange (the attainment of “sovereignty by means of sovereignty,” to paraphrase the economist Piero Sraffa<sup>23</sup>) is paradigmatically symbolized by 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.”) In order to preserve their security, countries adhering to the community must commit to the defense of the entire *communitas* and, consequently, of each member. Furthermore, by undertaking such a commitment, the members of the community must accept the basic assumption on which the “emancipative bond” is founded. In the case of the Atlantic community, this assumption was represented by anticommunism and hostility to the Soviet Union.

It goes without saying that the dilemma was particularly dramatic in the case of Italy, a “frontier country” located at the geographic and political margins of the community’s perimeter. These “emancipative bonds” of the *communitas* produced an effort to transform Italy. On this there was a convergence of sorts among the different elements of the Truman administration: free traders, Keynesian New Dealers, and geopolitically-minded officials of the Department of State. They offered different interpretations of Italy’s problems and the prescriptions for solving them; but they shared the belief that a profound political, economic, social, and cultural transformation of Italy was needed in order to “save” it from communism. This conviction even characterized the post-Truman years when a different attempt to “transform” Italy would be promoted by Eisenhower’s representative in Rome, Clare Boothe Luce.

And this bond, it must be said, operated immediately. In contrast to what is usually claimed, the rebirth of Italy's intelligence services after the signing of the Atlantic treaty indicated a reacquisition of sovereignty, not proof of full US control. (A similar story followed with the German *Bundesnachrichtendienst*, which became an autonomous and independent intelligence service not as a consequence of the birth of the Federal Republic of Germany, but by its inclusion in NATO in 1956).<sup>24</sup> Analogously, Italy could comply with the commitments of Alliance membership only if the military clauses of the 1947 Peace Treaty were lifted, which happened with the three-party declaration by France, Great Britain, and the United States in September 1951. Again, participation in the community allowed Italy to reacquire a central element of sovereignty that had been lost with the war and defeat of the Fascist regime.

At the same time, however, the Italian government was subjected to intense pressures and urged to abandon the constitutional premises on which the newborn Italian republic was founded. Washington explicitly asked for a series of discriminatory measures against a relevant part of the Italian population that supported the PCI, whose outlaw was repeatedly solicited by the United States between 1951 and 1955. Such requests can be found in the plans for Italy elaborated by the Psychological Strategy Board (PSB), the agency in charge of psychological warfare that was established by Truman in 1951. The PSB was more insistent in the following months, particularly after Eisenhower's ascent to president (January 1953) and the arrival of Clare Boothe Luce in Italy (April 1953).<sup>25</sup>

In some of my writings, I have emphasized the capacity of De Gasperi and other important Democrazia Cristiana (DC) leaders to contain US pressures and, consequently, safeguard Italy's constitutional precepts. In Italy, the DC successfully contained the US strategy of containment of the Soviet Union and international communism.<sup>26</sup>

To his American interlocutors, De Gasperi constantly stressed the political legitimacy of the PCI and, therefore, the necessity to act within the boundaries of the constitution. By doing so, the Prime Minister became the main target of Luce and other Eisenhower cold warriors (such as Henry Tasca and C. D. Jackson), who accused him of failing to exploit the window of opportunity offered by the 1948 electoral success to strike a definitive blow against the PCI and the communist trade unions. In the moment of maximum tension in between 1953 and 1954, De Gasperi, who was no longer prime minister and thus benefited from greater freedom of action, intervened more and more in the discussion, criticizing US requests to outlaw the PCI and denouncing "international McCarthyism" and the "discouraging and unjustified alarmism" of the United States, according to which Italy was about to "throw itself into the arms of Communism."<sup>27</sup>

I would like to conclude, however, by mentioning a second aspect that must be added to the constitutional sensibility of De Gasperi and most

Christian Democrats and that, in many aspects, represented its essential precondition: the role of the Atlantic community in the DC policy of containing US containment. Here I advance the hypothesis that the inclusion of Italy in the Atlantic community actually helped Italian governments to resist US pressures. Becoming “Atlantic,” so to speak, conferred additional strength to those looking to restrain the full logic of the cold war and anticommunism in the Italian theater.

Italy’s membership in the Atlantic *communitas* contributed to the defense of the constitutional premises of the republic in two different, although strictly interconnected, ways: one domestic and the other international. On the domestic side, Italy’s participation in the Alliance paradoxically disciplined and stabilized the political situation, in spite of the bitter debate that preceded the ratification of the Atlantic Pact and in the following months. The definition of Italy’s international position concurred to put an end to the fluidity and extreme political volatility of the postwar years. It froze the political order in a highly imperfect bipolarism that, although destined to reveal all its limits and contradictions in the following decades, was initially capable of stopping any possible political regression toward an authoritarian model. Such a result was facilitated by a second political outcome of Italy’s inclusion in the Atlantic community: the further strengthening of De Gasperi as the legitimate, and in many ways natural, leader of Italy and the only credible interlocutor for the United States. The inclusion of Italy in the Atlantic Alliance reinforced the DC leader’s commitment to resist and contain US anticommunist pressures, especially at a time when these pressures become more intense as a consequence of Washington’s decision to include Italy in the defensive perimeter that the United States intended to protect and defend. With regard to the international dimension, joining the *communitas* also had a disciplinary effect, rescuing Italy from the ambiguous state of “frontier country” that, during the cold war, represented the worst environmental condition for the survival of a stable democracy. Italy’s participation in a multilateral organization such as NATO would be used by De Gasperi and his successors to cushion some of the excesses of US foreign policy and impede the attempts (such as those by the PSB) to solve, once and for all, the Italian anomaly through bilateral US-Italian initiatives. For instance, De Gasperi always advocated the creation of specific NATO structures in charge of psychological warfare as a way to keep them from falling into the domain of bilateral US-Italian affairs and, thus, be able to contain US interference in domestic Italian politics.<sup>28</sup>

Ultimately, participation in the Atlantic community offered Italy the possibility of re-acquiring at least some of its lost sovereignty and to strengthen its capacity to contain containment. Thereby, it could avoid cold war imperatives that would simply crush the frail and young democracy built after the war. At the same time, it also exposed Italy to new pressures and imposed other commitments, thus obliging the governmental parties—and the DC overall—to constantly mediate and compromise in order to

preserve a delicate equilibrium that, on more than one occasion during the cold war, seemed on the verge of collapsing.

## NOTES

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2. Guido Formigoni, *La Democrazia Cristiana e l'Alleanza Occidentale* [Christian democracy and the Western Alliance] (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1996); Roberto Gualtieri, "Piano Marshall, commercio estero e sviluppo in Italia: alle origini dell'europeismo centrista" [The Marshall Plan, foreign trade and development in Italy: The origins of European centrism], *Studi Storici* no. 3 (1998): 853-97; Alessandro Brogi, *A Question of Self-Esteem: The United States and the Cold War Choices—France and Italy, 1944-1958* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2001).
3. See Antonio Varsori, *L'Italia nelle relazioni internazionali dal 1943 al 1992* [Italy in international relations from 1943 to 1992] (Rome and Bari: Laterza, 1998), which still offers the best general analysis of post-1945 Italian foreign policy. Among the many essays on the "international choice" of Italy, see the detailed reconstructions of Antonio Varsori, *La scelta occidentale dell'Italia, 1948-1949* [Italy's International Choice, 1948-1949], "Storia delle Relazioni Internazionali," 1 (part I) and 2 (part II), 1985, 95-159 and 303-68. See also Lorenza Sebesta, *L'Europa Indifesa: Sistema di Sicurezza Atlantica e Caso Italiano, 1948-1955* [Europe undefended: The Atlantic security system and the Italian case, 1948-1955] (Florence: Ponte alle Grazie, 1991); and Federico Romero, *Gli Stati Uniti in Italia: il Piano Marshall e il Patto Atlantico* [The United States in Italy: The Marshall Plan and the Atlantic Pact], in Aa.Vv. (various authors), *Storia dell'Italia Repubblicana*, vol. 1, *La Costruzione della Democrazia: Dalla caduta del Fascismo agli Anni Cinquanta* [History of Republican Italy I: The construction of democracy from the fall of fascism to the fifties] (Turin: Einaudi, 1994), 233-89.
4. Alberto Tarchiani, *Dieci anni tra Roma e Washington* [Ten years between Rome and Washington] (Milan: Mondadori, 1955); Egidio Ortona, *Anni d'America: La Ricostruzione, 1944-1951* [American years: The reconstruction, 1944-1951] (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1986).
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7. Giovanni Miccoli, "La Chiesa di Pio XII nella società italiana del dopoguerra" [The Church of Pius XII in postwar Italian society], in *Storia dell'Italia Repubblicana*, 535-613; Ennio Di Nolfo, "La politica estera del Vaticano e l'Italia dal 1943 al 1948," [Vatican foreign policy and Italy from

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  9. Memorandum of Truman-Acheson conversation, 2 March 1949, *Foreign Relations of the United States* (hereafter *FRUS*), 1949, vol. 4, *Western Europe* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1949) 142–3; Dean G. Acheson, *Present at the Creation: My Years at the State Department* (New York: Norton, 1969), 364–74.
  10. On Kennan’s organic view of the Atlantic community, see especially Stephanson, *Kennan*, 137–44.
  11. On this, see especially Frank Ninkovich, *Modernity and Power: A History of the Domino Theory in the Twentieth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994); and idem, *The Wilsonian Century: U.S. Foreign Policy Since 1900* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999).
  12. In addition to the aforementioned works of Ninkovich, see Anders Stephanson, “Fourteen Notes on the Concept of the Cold War,” in *Rethinking Geopolitics*, ed. Simon Dalby and Gearóid Ó Tuathail, (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), 62–85; and Anders Stephanson, “Liberty or Death: the Cold War as US Ideology,” in *Reviewing the Cold War: Approaches, Interpretations, and Theory*, ed. Odd Arne Westad (London: Frank Cass, 2000), 81–100. See also Warren Kimball, *The Juggler: Franklin Roosevelt as Wartime Statesman* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991); Michael J. Hogan, *A Cross of Iron: Harry S. Truman and the Origins of the National Security State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Aaron L. Friedberg, *In the Shadow of the Garrison State: America’s Anti-Statism and Its Cold War Strategy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000); Douglas Stuart, *Creating the National Security State: A History of the Law that Transformed America* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008).
  13. Ninkovich, *Modernity and Power*, 118, 120.
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  15. Sebesta, *L’Europa indifesa*; Chester J. Pach Jr., *Arming the Free World* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991).
  16. Stephanson, *Kennan*, 138; Harper, *American Visions of Europe*, 206.
  17. “Misshapen Pact,” *Washington Post*, 18 March 1949. Emphasis added.
  18. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, *Hearing of Gen. Omar Bradley*, 3 May 1949, 81st Congress, 1st Session, 332–3; Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, *Hearing of Charles P. Taft*, 6 May 1949, 81st Congress, 1st Session, 517.



19. "Text of Secretary's Acheson Broadcast on Atlantic Accord," *The New York Times*, 19 March, 1949; Memorandum of Conversation Truman-Acheson, *FRUS, 1949, vol. 4*, 141–5; Anne O'Hare McCormick, "Cause and Effect of the Rise of the New Atlantis," *The New York Times*, 23 March 1949 and "The Security Pact is not an End but a Beginning," *The New York Times*, 4 April 1949; Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, *Hearing of Warren Austin*, 28 April 1949, 81st Congress, 1st Session, 99; Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, *Hearing of John Foster Dulles*, 4 May 1949, 81st Congress, 1st Session, 360; On this aspect see also the excellent research of Kaeten Mistry, *Perceptions of Success: the United States, Italy and Political Warfare, 1945–1948*, Ph.D. thesis, University of Birmingham, 2007.
20. Roberto Esposito, *Communitas: Origine e destino della Comunità* [Communitas: Origin and destiny of the community] (Torino: Einaudi, 1998), xvi.
21. *Washington Post*, "Remarks of the Portuguese, British and American Representatives," 5 April 1949. It is important also to underline how the lack of security was the crucial factor behind another important "communitarian" experiment of those years, which led to the process of European integration. Alan Milward, *The European Rescue of the Nation State* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994).
22. In the following years, these concerns manifested themselves in discussions on whether (and how) to rearm a country such as Italy that could switch sides and join the opposite camp at any moment.
23. Piero Sraffa, *Production of Commodities by Means of Commodities. Prelude to a Critique of Economic Theory*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1960; *The North Atlantic Treaty*, Washington DC, April 4, 1949 ([http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official\\_texts\\_17120.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_17120.htm), last accessed December 29, 2009)
24. Italy's intelligence had de facto been dismantled at the end of the war in 1945. For a different interpretation, which emphasizes absolute US control of Italy's intelligence services, see Giuseppe De Lutiis, *Storia dei servizi segreti in Italia* [History of secret services in Italy], 2nd edition (Rome: Editori Riuniti, 1991).
25. On US initiatives against the PCI in Italy, see Mario Del Pero, "The United States and Psychological Warfare in Italy, 1948–1955," *Journal of American History* no. 1 (2001): 1304–34; idem, *L'alleato scomodo: Gli Usa e la DC negli anni del centrismo, 1948–1955* [The inconvenient ally: The United States and the DC in the years of centrism, 1948–1955] (Rome: Carocci, 2001); and idem, "American Pressures and their Containment in Italy during the Ambassadorship of Clare Boothe Luce, 1953–1956," *Diplomatic History* no. 3 (2004): 407–39.
26. Mario Del Pero, "Containing Containment: Rethinking Italy's Experience During the Cold War," *Journal of Modern Italian Studies* no. 4 (2003): 532–55 and works mentioned in note 24.
27. Alcide De Gasperi, "Non bisogna esagerare" [Don't exaggerate] and "Noi e il comunismo in Italia" [The communism and us in Italy], *Il Popolo*, 22 January and 25 February 1954.
28. On this aspect, see the discussions during De Gasperi's visit in the United States in September 1951 in *FRUS, 1951, vol. 4, Europe: Political and Economic Developments* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1985), 674–718; and in National Archives and Record Administration (NARA), Record Group 59, *General Records of the Department of State* (RG 59), Lot File 64D563, *Records of the Policy Planning Staff, 1947–1953*, box 18, f. "Italy," College Park, Maryland.



# 10 The Atlantic Community and the Restoration of the Global Balance of Power

## The Western Alliance, Japan, and the Cold War, 1947–1951

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### INTRODUCTION

Recalling his years at the Department of State, George F. Kennan wrote in his memoirs that “the theaters of our greatest dangers, our greatest responsibilities, and our greatest possibilities at that moment were the two occupied areas of Western Germany and Japan.” These two defeated countries could affect the entire global balance of power, as “these places were the centers, respectively, of the two greatest industrial complexes of East and West.”<sup>1</sup> Therefore, one of the most important tasks for the newly established Policy Planning Staff (PPS) in 1947 was to aid these two countries for the purpose of tying them firmly to the West.

Without Germany and Japan, the Western powers would have faced serious difficulties in counterbalancing the expanding communist bloc. While the three Western powers that occupied Germany began to integrate their occupation zones, both the United States and British governments recognized the importance of transforming Japan from an “occupied ex-enemy” to a “fully sovereign member of international society in voluntary association with the democratic powers.”<sup>2</sup> It then became necessary that “they be kept out of Communist hands and that their great resources be utilized to the full for constructive purposes.”<sup>3</sup> According to Kennan, there were “only five centers of industrial and military power in the world which are important to us from the standpoint of national security.” They were the United States, Great Britain, Germany, the Soviet Union, and Japan.<sup>4</sup>

In this chapter, I will argue that the Japan Problem, namely, both the “defense against Japan” and the “defense of Japan,” was one of the biggest problems facing the future of the Western Alliance.<sup>5</sup> If Japan were to fall into the communist orbit, it would affect the global balance of power. It was therefore essential for Japan to become firmly aligned with the Western Alliance. At the same time, I will point out how the Atlantic community powers, above all the US and Britain, recognized the importance of sharing common values and culture. Without these “common interests and ideals,” they had to abandon a Pacific Pact, and decided instead to create a US-Japan alliance for the purpose of strengthening the Western Alliance.

**GEORGE F. KENNAN AND JAPAN:  
“RESTORING A BALANCE OF POWER”**

The deadlock at the Council of Foreign Ministers in Moscow in April 1947 marked an important turning point for US foreign policy. Soon after returning from Moscow, Secretary of State George Marshall asked George Kennan to head a newly established Policy Planning Staff (PPS) within the Department of State. To Kennan, it seemed that the most urgent agenda for the US government at that time was restoring the global balance of power. Having accepted Marshall's offer, Kennan turned his attention to the two countries he considered most important to focus on: Germany and Japan.

In a lecture given on May 6, he argued that “it is imperatively urgent today that the improvement of economic conditions and the revival of productive capacity in the west of Germany be made the primary object of our policy in that area and be given top priority in all our occupation policies.”<sup>6</sup> In order to help the economies of Western European countries, including Western Germany, Kennan drafted the first policy paper of the PPS, titled “Policy with Respect to American Aid to Western Europe.”<sup>7</sup> This concept of strategic aid gave rise to George Marshall's speech at Harvard University in June 1947, later known as the Marshall Plan.

Having initiated the Marshall Plan, providing aid to Japan, the other of “the two greatest industrial complexes,” emerged as the most urgent task for the PPS.<sup>8</sup> Recalling his role in transforming Japan from an “ex-enemy” to a friendly power to the West, Kennan wrote, “I consider my part in bringing about this change to have been, after the Marshall Plan, the most significant constructive contribution I was ever able to make in government.”<sup>9</sup> Kennan began bringing this change about on 14 October 1947 when he drafted a PPS report on the future of Japan, which states that “the Staff sees great risks in an early relinquishment of Allied control over Japan.”<sup>10</sup> The report was a response to a movement toward an early peace treaty with Japan initiated by General Douglas MacArthur, the Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers (SCAP) in March 1947.<sup>11</sup> MacArthur and Hugh Borton, a Japan expert in the State Department, believed that they had to proceed to an early peace treaty and that post-treaty Japan had to be strictly demilitarized. At this moment, Japan was not an ally of the West but an “ex-enemy” that needed to be deterred. Based upon these considerations, the Borton Group drafted the Treaty of Peace with Japan on 5 August 1947.<sup>12</sup>

In a subsequent policy paper, PPS13, Kennan emphasized that “our policy must be directed toward restoring a balance of power in Europe and Asia.” The key was to aid both Germany and Japan. Although the United States started helping Western European countries through the Marshall Plan, “the Far Eastern area [was] in a state of almost total instability.” In light of this, Kennan argued that “our most immediate problem is Japan, where our responsibility is directly engaged.”<sup>13</sup> However, before submitting a final paper on this problem, Kennan thought it essential that “some

high official of this Department proceed to Japan and discuss in detail with General MacArthur and his assistants the issues involved.”<sup>14</sup> Kennan did not predict, however, that he would be the one chosen to visit General MacArthur in March 1948.<sup>15</sup>

Records of a conversation between Kennan and MacArthur show that

the General then described the area of the Pacific in which, in his opinion, it was necessary for us to have striking force . . . This was a U-shaped area embracing the Aleutians, Midway, the former Japanese mandated islands, Clark Field in the Philippines, and above all Okinawa.<sup>16</sup>

This was an important origin of the “off-shore islands chain” strategy of the United States, which resulted in the concept of a Pacific Pact. Kennan was impressed by MacArthur’s commentary. He fully understood the importance of a strategy that created a balance of power by linking this “off-shore islands chain” with the American sphere of influence. In his speech at the National War College in May 1948, Kennan stated: “I think there can be no question but that a Japan in unfriendly hands would be dangerously detrimental to our own security.”<sup>17</sup> The US government came to realize that Japan had to be securely placed within its orbit and defended by its military power.

#### **BRITAIN’S POLICY FOR THE “CONSOLIDATION OF THE WEST”**

One week after five Western European countries signed the Brussels Treaty on 16 March 1948, the British government initiated diplomatic negotiations to create an “Atlantic Pact” with US officials in Washington, DC, together with the Canadian ambassador to the US.<sup>18</sup> Since the White House had just decided to aid the Western Union countries militarily, as recorded in its National Security Council Report of 13 April 1948, it seemed more feasible than before to form an Atlantic alliance that included the US.<sup>19</sup> Having witnessed a coup d’état in Czechoslovakia in March, the British government realized that a wider security framework than a purely Western Union would be necessary.<sup>20</sup> These negotiations helped conclude the North Atlantic Treaty signed on 4 April 1949. The Atlantic Alliance, based upon Anglo-American cooperation, thus became the core of the Western Alliance.

Upon becoming permanent Under Secretary at the Foreign Office on 1 February 1949, William Strang proposed his own tour to the Far East.<sup>21</sup> Strang wanted to have firsthand knowledge of the areas where Communist influence was spreading. At this time, British Chiefs of Staff feared that “the spread of communism into Southern China will cause increased unrest

and consequently an increased security commitment throughout Southeast Asia.”<sup>22</sup> British Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin assented to Strang’s request. His journey included stops at Karachi, Delhi, Calcutta, Rangoon, Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Hong Kong, Shanghai, and Tokyo, which Strang described as “the sea-girt periphery, or what has been called the Rimland, which skirts the Heartland of Europe and Asia.” According to his geopolitical consideration, “this Heartland was already then in large measure under Soviet control.” Therefore, “the importance of our maintaining control of this periphery, from Oslo round to Tokyo, of denying it to Communism and, if possible, of defending it against military attack was brought home to the further one traveled.”<sup>23</sup>

Strang thought it crucial “to look at the periphery as a whole.”<sup>24</sup> As an imperial power, Britain felt it necessary to have a comprehensive global strategy that could cover all the vital areas of the British Empire. Strang thus initiated two important memorandums that stipulated a long-term British foreign policy. Both papers were drafted by the Permanent Under Secretary’s Committee (PUSC), a newly established inner forum similar to, but more influential than, Kennan’s PPS. The first of these important PUSC memorandums was titled “The Third World Power or Western Consolidation?”<sup>25</sup> In this memorandum, Strang argued that Britain ought to abandon the unrealistic “third force” concept, which aimed at establishing an independent “Western Union.” Instead, he prioritized a “Western consolidation” based upon the newly created Atlantic Alliance.

The other important memorandum drafted by the PUSC was titled “Regional Co-operation in South-East Asia and the Far East.”<sup>26</sup> This memorandum stated that British influence “could best be directed to the building up of some sort of regional association in Asia with which the Western Powers and the Pacific members of the Commonwealth would be in some way allied.” By 1949 the Atlantic Alliance, based upon the Anglo-American cooperation, was beginning to be linked with a global strategy for the “consolidation of the West.” The Western Alliance thus had to be strengthened and expanded.

The future of Japan was a vital component of this global strategy. Bevin argued that “the spread of Communism in China will enhance the political and strategic importance of Japan as the most important non-Communist area in East Asia, and seems certain to strengthen the determination of the United States Government that Japan shall not fall under Communist domination.”<sup>27</sup> In addition, the Permanent Under Secretary’s Committee argued that “the security of Japan and the denial of her islands to a potential enemy might be ensured by a bilateral defense agreement between the United States and Japan which would enable the former to retain bases in Japan proper.” The British government confessed that “militarily we cannot accept any commitment in this area,” while admitting there was a need to ensure that “in a post-treaty Japan the United Kingdom would try, in close consultation with the United States and the British Commonwealth,

as well as with other like-minded Powers represented there, to steer the Japanese away from communism and towards a closer association with the West.”<sup>28</sup> The British government therefore urged the US government toward an early peace treaty accompanied with this “bilateral defence agreement between the United States and Japan.”<sup>29</sup> The result of the Chinese Civil War was thus closely related to this reinterpretation of Japan’s strategic significance.<sup>30</sup> As the cold war became global, the Western Alliance as well as Western strategies had to do the same.

### JAPAN, THE WESTERN ALLIANCE, AND THE COLD WAR IN ASIA

It was not unthinkable that Japan would become a neutral or even socialist state, as both socialist and communist movements were gaining momentum in postwar Japanese society. For example, a group of influential intellectuals began organizing the Peace Problems Discussion Group in early 1949. They then published a significant declaration arguing that “in regard to post-treaty security, we desire neutrality, nonaggression, and membership in the United Nations.” At the same time, they also declared that “we absolutely oppose granting military bases to any country for any reason.”<sup>31</sup> This declaration obviously denied Japan’s alignment with the Western Alliance.

Japan’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs had been researching the possibility of a peace treaty and post-treaty security arrangements from as early as November 1945.<sup>32</sup> Shigeru Yoshida, who became prime minister in 1946, described Japan’s preparation for a peace treaty as making “tens of volumes and hundreds of thousands of words”<sup>33</sup> of notes and memorandums by way of explanation to the Americans. In its first report, this governmental Committee on the Problem of the Peace Treaty recommended that the Japanese government propose “the permanent neutralization of Japan based upon international law” as well as “a collective security organization consisting of the Far Eastern Commission member states.”<sup>34</sup> This reflected an optimistic expectation that the four powers—namely, the US, the UK, the Soviet Union, and China—could cooperate effectively during the early postwar years. At the same time, Japan’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs repeatedly expressed its desire for a peace treaty based upon principles of both the Atlantic Charter of 1941 and the United Nations Charter of 1945.<sup>35</sup>

The Japanese government gradually realized the difficulty of drafting a peace treaty based upon cooperation between the four powers; and at the same time, it came to realize the predominant power of the US. On 12 June 1947, the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs shifted its position toward a more realistic one, admitting that the neutrality of Japan itself was not sufficient to keep Japan secure. The Foreign Ministry moved closer

to proposing that Japan should join the United Nations soon after the ratification of the peace treaty and that some regional security arrangements in the Western Pacific would be necessary.<sup>36</sup> At the same time, the Foreign Ministry linked the development of a Japanese peace treaty with wider international issues, such as the Truman Doctrine, the Marshall Plan, and the Chinese Civil War.<sup>37</sup> The Japanese government began to reformulate its position on a peace treaty within the context of cold war developments.<sup>38</sup>

Having perceived the recent changes in American policy toward Asia, the Treaties Bureau of the Foreign Ministry thought Japan should be secured by US military forces. In May 1949, the Treaties Bureau drafted a paper on the methods of guaranteeing Japan's security. In that paper, three options were considered: a "declaration of permanent neutrality"; an "alliance treaty with a certain country"; and the "establishment of a mutual security organization." Among these three, the second option, a security treaty, was thought to be the best course for Japan's policy.<sup>39</sup> By this time, the option of a "declaration of permanent neutrality" was largely abandoned, and peace with the Western powers—*Tandoku kowa*, a "majority peace" or "separate peace"—was chiefly preferred.

At a meeting between American Secretary of State Dean Acheson and British Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin in Washington in September 1949, the two governments basically agreed on the desirability of an early peace treaty with Japan, which marked an important starting point for drafting this treaty.<sup>40</sup> The Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs greatly welcomed this development and sped up its preparation for an imminent peacemaking conference. The two governments feared that the occupied situation "would cause anti-occupation and also anti-American sentiments among Japanese people" because of Japanese frustration over its ambiguous status.<sup>41</sup>

Kumao Nishimura, the head of the Treaties Bureau, investigated the possibility and desirability of "majority peace" in an important confidential memorandum of December 1949. In it, he clearly states that "Japan's security should be guaranteed by the United States and its associated powers."<sup>42</sup> Nishimura concludes by saying that the US should be allowed to have military bases in Japan, especially on the islands outside the mainland. Nishimura emphasized the importance of limiting American military bases to peripheral islands since American bases on the mainland would easily cause anti-American sentiments among the Japanese.<sup>43</sup>

This line became Japan's official policy for "majority peace." While emphasizing the importance of remaining "unarmed," as Japan's new constitution stipulated in article 9, Japan's security was to be entrusted to the US. At this time, Nishimura tried to link the Allied Powers that occupied Japan to the United Nations, whose Charter he deeply respected. For Nishimura, both the United Nations and the United States were to be the basis of Japan's postwar security, even though Japan was not yet a member of the UN.<sup>44</sup>

## THE ATLANTIC COMMUNITY AND THE ORIGINS OF THE PACIFIC PACT

The signing of the North Atlantic Treaty on 4 April 1949 unintentionally made a great impact on strategic relations in Asia. Although the treaty aimed at securing the North Atlantic and Western European areas, the international security of Southeast and East Asia was gradually linked with the development of the Atlantic community.

President Elpidio Quirino of the Philippines was the first to publicly request a Pacific Pact that included anticommunist countries in the Pacific Rim. Quirino was impressed by the development of the Atlantic Alliance and proposed “a Pacific pact somewhat along the lines of the North Atlantic agreement.” To form “a Pacific pact,” he emphasized the importance of “the leadership of the US, which would be beneficial both to the Far Eastern nations and the US itself regardless of whether or not the latter could commit itself with the same firmness as in the Atlantic Pacific or supply any appreciable amount of military equipment.”<sup>45</sup>

At that time, the US State Department did not respond positively to the request from the Philippines. The Philippine ambassador to the US secretly informed them that the concept had emerged out of a domestic political situation.<sup>46</sup> However, the US State Department was also beginning to consider that a regional policy in the East Asian-Pacific area was strategically necessary.

The signing of the North Atlantic Treaty in April and the subsequent victory of the Communists in the Chinese Civil War transformed the whole picture. A PPS paper drafted just before the signing of the North Atlantic Treaty recommended a “continuing objective to encourage the SEA [South-east Asian] region to develop in harmony with the Atlantic Community and the rest of the Free World.” The US should thus “view the SEA region as an integral part of that great crescent formed by the Indian Peninsula, Australia and Japan.”<sup>47</sup>

George Kennan considered it necessary “to create a new and hopeful atmosphere in our East and South Asian policy.” One of his staff members at the PPS, John Davies, proceeded to draft a report titled “Suggested Course of Action in East and South Asia.”<sup>48</sup> In this report, Davies wrote,

We should sound out the Philippines and Australia on the desirability of a Three Power Defense Treaty, along the general lines of the Atlantic Pact, composed initially of the U.S., the Philippines and Australia. Eventually, this pact should embrace these three countries plus Canada, Japan and possibly New Zealand.

It is important to note that Kennan, who was the most skeptical of the establishment of a military alliance in the Atlantic region, did not like to expand the North Atlantic Treaty to embrace all the non-communist states. In a PPS report on the Atlantic Pact, Kennan argued that



beyond that Atlantic area, which is a clear-cut concept, and which embraces a real community of defense interest firmly rooted in geography and tradition, there is no logical stopping point in the development of a system of anti-Russian alliances until that system has circled the globe and has embraced all the non-communist countries of Europe, Asia and Africa.<sup>49</sup>

Kennan clearly differentiated the global association of Western countries from the “real community of defense interest” of the Atlantic community. Without this distinction, he felt “we would have weakened the integrity and significance of our own defense relationship with our neighbors of the North Atlantic community.”<sup>50</sup> Likewise, Walton Butterworth, Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs, argued that “there is, of course, serious question whether the Pacific states concerned will be able to build and maintain an effective union even for the limited purposes now under contemplation.”<sup>51</sup> While it was strategically necessary to tie these friendly countries to the Western Alliance, it seemed impracticable to form any multilateral security pact without common values and culture.

The British government was similarly skeptical about the possibility of forming a Pacific Pact. In his conversation with Kennan in Paris in August 1949, British Minister of State Hector McNeill told him that securing American military bases in Japan “might take the form of a bilateral pact between the US and Japan simultaneously with the conclusion of a treaty which would give the former the right to retain essential bases in Japan.”<sup>52</sup> Although Kennan was doubtful of both the possibility of a Japanese peace treaty and the US military’s accordance with such a treaty, McNeil firmly persuaded Kennan that these problems could be solved through “a bilateral pact between the US and Japan.” It should be remembered that it was the British and not the US government that initiated the creation of a bilateral security pact between the US and Japan. From September 1948 on, the British government argued for “a defence pact between the United States and Japan.”<sup>53</sup>

On 13 September 1949, Dean Acheson discussed the matter with his experts on Far Eastern affairs in preparation for his upcoming conversations with Ernest Bevin.<sup>54</sup> Acheson thought his government needed to move forward toward a peace treaty with Japan, just as the British government had repeatedly persuaded them to do. With the Berlin Blockade resolved, focus needed to shift to the Far Eastern situation where the communists were gradually expanding their sphere of influence. Acheson was aware that “the British felt that U.S. security requirements such as bases can be met through a separate agreement between the United States and Japan.”<sup>55</sup> However, the US State Department began to consider that a multilateral security pact would be preferable to meet the hopes of the non-communist countries of this region such as the Philippines, Australia, the Republic of China, and the Republic of Korea.

At the end of that year, the National Security Council drafted a critical report titled “The Position of the United States with Respect to Asia,” which became the basic strategy for this region.<sup>56</sup> The paper concluded by recommending that

the United States should make known its sympathy with the efforts of Asian leaders to form regional associations of non-Communist states of the various Asian areas, and if in due course associations eventuate, the United States should be prepared, if invited, to assist such associations to fulfill their purposes under conditions which would be to our interest.<sup>57</sup>

The center of gravity was Japan. In a previous version of the report, the council had stated that “if Japan, the principal component of a Far Eastern war-making complex, were added to the Stalinist bloc, the Soviet Asian base could become a source of strength capable of shifting the balance of world power to the disadvantage of the United States.”<sup>58</sup> In consideration of this balance of power, the second report strongly recommended an anti-communist regional strategy, one linked with the concept of a Pacific Pact being studied in the State Department around this time.

## FROM A PACIFIC PACT TO THE US-JAPAN ALLIANCE

In February 1950, John Howard, the special assistant to Secretary of State Acheson, initiated the drafting of a paper on a Pacific Pact.<sup>59</sup> Knowing that both Acheson and President Truman largely agreed on this initiative, Howard drafted a memorandum titled “Position of the Department of State on United States Policy toward a Japanese Peace and Security Settlement.”<sup>60</sup> The main concern was how to create security arrangements that could persuade both the Department of Defense and the countries concerned. This was the first concrete memorandum drafted by the State Department on a Pacific Pact. According to Howard, “the membership would include, initially, the United States, Canada, the Philippines, Australia, New Zealand and Japan.” From then on, the State Department considered that this Pacific Pact would be the best security arrangement for establishing a Japanese peace treaty.

In April, leading Republican foreign affairs expert John Foster Dulles was appointed as a special advisor to the president in order to establish the treaty. In addition to solving this problem, President Truman needed someone who could also promote bipartisan foreign policy.<sup>61</sup> Dulles’s appointment marked an important turning point. He saw the world quite differently from Kennan since morality and Christianity were much more important for him, and he argued that “the trouble is not material.”<sup>62</sup> In a March 1948 speech, Dulles maintained that “there is a vacuum of moral

power throughout much of the world, caused by a certain decadence on the part of the Western democracies, which for centuries had had the moral ascendancy.”<sup>63</sup> He linked anti-Communist policy with Western spirituality and felt that the West needed to “turn [its] attention and [its] material aid to the pressing situations elsewhere, notably in the Pacific and the Far East” since “we are engaged in a global struggle, as in World War II.”<sup>64</sup>

Dulles began to study the background of the security problems linked to a Japanese peace treaty and became aware of the Pacific Pact, whose concept he did not like at first. He maintained that he saw no “brotherhood” with Japan and expressed doubt about this “collective security arrangement.”<sup>65</sup> He wrote in his book that “another general consideration is that any polices for Asia and the Pacific must recognize the distinctive religions and cultures of Asia.” Dulles continued by explaining that

it is relatively easy for the United States to work with the peoples of Europe because we belong to the same ‘Western’ civilization. Our religion, culture, political institutions, education, and ways of life are much the same; and, in consequence, we think much alike and can understand one another. But when we work with the peoples of Asia it is a different matter.<sup>66</sup>

Heedless of Dulles’s doubts, the State Department drafted a more concrete Pacific Pact plan in the middle of April.<sup>67</sup> The State Department developed this regional security concept mainly to establish an early peace treaty with Japan, and Dulles soon recognized this necessity as well.

When Dulles visited Japan in June to study the situation in the Far East, he talked with Alvary Gascoigne on the subject of peace settlements with Japan. Gascoigne headed the British liaison mission (UKLIM) in Tokyo between July 1946 and February 1951. He was virtually a British ambassador to Japan and maintained a close relationship with General MacArthur.<sup>68</sup> Gascoigne noticed that “Dulles seemed to be preoccupied by the responsibility which the United States would assume by the signing of a bilateral defence pact with Japan.” Therefore, Gascoigne thought that Dulles “would prefer that this should be a multilateral instrument so that America should not, overtly at any rate, be alone responsible for Japan’s security.”<sup>69</sup>

Indeed, Dulles felt that “it is important that the responsibility should be equally shared by the governments of the free countries of Asia and the Pacific.”<sup>70</sup> The British ambassador in Washington, Oliver Franks, observed that the State Department now argued more firmly than before that “a bilateral agreement between the US and Japan would have certain disadvantages and the State Department would infinitely prefer a multilateral agreement in which other like-minded Powers would join.”<sup>71</sup> Concordantly, Dean Acheson made it clear to Bevin that “the United States thinking tended to favour having as many powers as possible.”<sup>72</sup>

The British government had a considerably different conception of post-treaty Asia-Pacific security. After the Commonwealth Colombo Conference of January 1950, it was more than clear that both Australia and New Zealand disliked the idea of a multilateral security treaty with Japan since this was their foremost enemy. Furthermore, as Esler Denning argued, “if anything of this sort came to pass, we might find that Australia and New Zealand were unwilling to commit any forces to the Middle East in the event of war because of their commitments towards Japan.”<sup>73</sup> It was therefore largely agreed among the Commonwealth countries that a bilateral defense treaty between the US and Japan was much more preferable and that the US alone should undertake the responsibility to secure Japan.<sup>74</sup> British Minister of Defence A. V. Alexander strongly recommended that “the best means of limiting Japanese military activity would be for the United States and Japan to enter into a Bilateral Defence Treaty.”<sup>75</sup> In their view, a multilateral defense treaty seemed unrealistic, and the British government needed to dissuade the Americans away from it.<sup>76</sup>

Likewise, the Japanese government also concluded that a bilateral security treaty was the best of all the possible courses. Above all, the Korean War had had a great impact upon the way the Japanese thought about the future of their security. Japan’s Foreign Ministry observed that “the American attitude towards a Pacific Pact has been transformed after the Korean War”; and this was correlate to the fact that “the North Atlantic Treaty has been promoted by the Communist coup in Czechoslovakia in February 1948.” Having seen the devastating result of the outbreak of war in Korea, Kumao Nishimura thought that “invasions must be prevented beforehand.”<sup>77</sup> Japan’s Foreign Ministry was fully aware of the importance of American military bases in Japan as “a measure by the democratic countries to defend against military aggression by the Communist Powers.”<sup>78</sup> Furthermore, since West Germany had been requested to rearm itself, it was felt that Japan needed to do the same in order to strengthen the “free world.”<sup>79</sup> After the opening of the Korean War, both Japan and West Germany were requested to contribute militarily in order to strengthen the Western Alliance, although there were various obstacles to implementing this.

By 1950, both the American and the British governments had consolidated their global strategies. The victory of the communists in China, the Soviet atomic bomb, and the Korean War all confirmed the necessity for greater military strength within the Western Alliance. An important report, NSC 68, recommended that “a more rapid build-up of political, economic, and military strength and thereby of confidence in the free world than is now contemplated is the only course which is consistent with progress toward achieving our fundamental purpose.”<sup>80</sup>

British Chiefs of staff also produced a significant global-strategy paper in July 1950, which stated that “an essential prerequisite of ultimate success in the cold war is the development in the West of adequate military strength.”<sup>81</sup> On the subject of the Far East, it noted that while “in the West

we have the ramparts of the Atlantic Treaty and the European Recovery Programme . . . in Asia there is no such solidarity.” The British Chiefs of staff noticed this “very serious gap in our global cold war front.” Evidently, a bilateral security pact between Japan and the US would be necessary to bring peace and stability to the region since “it would no doubt be premature at this stage to attempt anything on the lines of the Atlantic Treaty.”

On 9 January 1951, the prime ministers of the Commonwealth met at 10 Downing Street in London. The Australian prime minister admitted that his country “still feared the military resurgence of Japan in the same way and for the same reasons as France feared the military resurgence of Germany.” Additionally, he pointed out that “Australia’s attitude towards these questions might, however, be modified if the United States were willing to guarantee Australia’s security.” Therefore, “Australia would have no objection to the United States maintaining bases in Japan on the strength of a bilateral treaty with the Japanese government, or securing the trusteeship of former Japanese islands in the Pacific: both measures would reinforce the safeguards which Australia sought.” The Australian government thus defended a bilateral security treaty between the US and Japan.<sup>82</sup>

After this Commonwealth meeting, Dulles visited Tokyo to talk with Gascoigne about a security arrangement. Gascoigne strongly opposed the idea of creating a Pacific Pact, despite Dulles’s efforts to persuade him by explaining that he did not wish to go beyond the islands in the Pacific nor to make it a pact that would cover all of the Pacific Ocean and Asia.<sup>83</sup> On 9 February, before Dulles spoke with the Australian and New Zealand prime ministers, the British Cabinet endorsed the objections to the Pacific Pact and “agreed that every effort should be made to find an alternative, e.g., by a US guarantee of their security in war.” The Cabinet concluded that “Dulles’ proposals for a Defence Council [of a Pacific Pact] in their form are unacceptable.”<sup>84</sup> This conclusion led both the Australian and New Zealand governments to dissuade Dulles from his Pacific Pact and persuade him instead to agree on a trilateral Pacific Pact with the US. Six months later, shortly before signing the San Francisco Peace Treaty with the Allied Powers, Prime Minister Yoshida signed the Security Treaty with the US, while the Australian and New Zealand governments ratified their own ANZUS Treaty with the US around the same time. These security arrangements brought Japan into “international society in voluntary association with democratic powers”<sup>85</sup> and restored the global balance of power by tying Japan to the Western Alliance.

## CONCLUSION

In a Cabinet meeting on 8 March 1950, Ernest Bevin argued the importance of consolidating the Atlantic community based upon cooperation between Britain and the US:

To withstand the great concentration of power now stretching from China to the Oder, the United Kingdom and Western Europe must be able to rely on the full support of the English-speaking democracies of the Western Hemisphere; and for the original conception of Western Union we must now begin to substitute the wider conception of the Atlantic community.<sup>86</sup>

It was therefore necessary to integrate West Germany into this community. The most important issue at the Foreign Ministers' meeting of the US, the UK and France in New York in September 1950 was the rearmament of West Germany.<sup>87</sup> It was no coincidence that the issue of a Japanese peace treaty also arose at this meeting. After the opening of the Korean War, both the American and British governments felt the need to strengthen the Western Alliance. The Atlantic community had to be at its core, but a wider association of democracies "which skirts the Heartland of Europe and Asia," to use Strang's description, was more necessary than ever. It was certainly not expected that the Atlantic community would solve the conflicts of this entire area, but the Western Alliance wanted to strengthen its ties to both West Germany and Japan in order to restore a global balance of power.

A Pacific Pact, or a "Pacific NATO," was never realized; there was too much distrust and antagonism between the participating countries. As Denning has explained, "the North Atlantic Treaty presupposes a group of nations with common interests and ideals. It would be difficult to find such a group in the Pacific outside of the United States, the British Dominions and the Philippines."<sup>88</sup> Security organizations are strengthened by such "common interests and ideals," and this indicates the real strength of the Atlantic community, something the Pacific Pact could not have achieved.

However, countries such as Japan, Australia, New Zealand, and the Republic of Korea now constitute the "global partners" with which NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer has said the organization should form an alliance.<sup>89</sup> NATO has respected "common interests and ideals," and the Atlantic community has been at the core of promoting and defending basic values such as democracy, freedom, and human rights. While the global balance of power has been significantly transformed since the cold war, the relevance of the Atlantic community lives on.

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## 11 Old West versus New West

### Perón's "Third Position," Latin America, and the Atlantic Community

*Loris Zanatta*

World War II and the outset of the cold war not only changed the idea of "the West," but they also laid the material and cultural foundations for a gradual and almost seamless change in what that ancient and noble term meant and evoked.<sup>1</sup> In this respect, the notion of "Atlantic community" reflected a cultural and linguistic transition, that is, a process by which old terms and shared concepts began to be used to describe or explain a new reality to the point of changing their meanings.

At first glance, this process—like any transition process—appears to be a tangled web of past and present, of old and new elements. Although it can be understood in many ways, the approach adopted here is among the most unusual, intriguing, and perhaps useful. What could appear as confused if observed up close will be examined from a distance. In other words, the impact of the Euro-American axis at the core of the Atlantic community will be evaluated from the periphery of Latin America. This vantage point on the postwar world is certainly a particular kind of periphery since it had been both Atlantic and Western before the war and remained so during its aftermath. Yet Latin America also changed its material and theoretical place in the new West as it was being shaped. This was neither a sudden rupture nor a sharp break; rather, it was an acceleration down a path that had been envisioned but not fully embraced. In this respect, the tough political and ideological conflicts underway in Latin America between World War II and the cold war were not only meaningful per se, but they also reflect the sea change that took place in the vast historical space known as "the West."

#### **LATIN AMERICA AND THE POSTWAR WORLD: THE HISTORIOGRAPHIC DEBATE**

The field of studies on Latin America between World War II and the cold war is not overpopulated, but it is not a wasteland either. Solid and interesting works are available, but their approach tends to be quite different from that proposed here. There are studies at the geopolitical level, wherein US

hegemony and the range of the Monroe Doctrine developed to the point of shaping the blazing inter-American system;<sup>2</sup> the economic level, wherein World War II had swept away the last remnants of British capitalism in Latin America and pushed the whole hemisphere to embrace American capitalism, until the cold war and economic considerations led Washington to outline the Marshall Plan for Western Europe, which triggered frustration and bitterness among Latin Americans;<sup>3</sup> the political level, wherein the war nourished a democratic ebb that soon turned into an authoritarian flow encouraged, blessed, or tolerated by the US;<sup>4</sup> and finally the ideological level, wherein antifascist fronts yielded to anticommunist ones as well as Pan-Americanism, that sort of hemispheric Atlanticism, faced nationalist backlash.<sup>5</sup>

Many of these studies carefully and thoughtfully explore these different levels. However, they fall short of an analysis on how World War II and the cold war imposed a bitter controversy over Latin America's cultural and spiritual place in the world and in history. The focus of the controversy was the meaning and implications of being part of an imaginary community called "the West" in a world being shaped by a bipolar system and at a time when this concept was gaining a meaning that was quite different from those that had previously overlapped with it, namely Hispanicity, Latinity, and Christianity. These concepts remained alive and influential, but their contours were increasingly different from—in fact, they opposed and directly threatened—the new idea of the West then taking shape. The linguistic and sentimental break between the West and these concepts that had once enveloped it was revealed by a constant and often unconscious meditation on the idea of *civilización*. Many intellectuals, artists, and poets, as well as politicians and religious and military leaders, started to wonder: Who are we? What *civilización* do we belong to, and what is our place in a new world being shaped by the cold war?

This is the starting point of the present study: how Latin America faced the issue of its *civilización* in a foreign policy perspective. It is a tangled and complex issue, one that is old and vast and that has impacted both American hemispheres as well as both sides of the Atlantic. While it may be difficult to grasp all its implications, efforts will be made to do so by focusing on one exceptional case that has been analyzed as a reactant in order to unveil all the apparently invisible issues at stake. That exceptional case is Argentina during the Perón years, when it ardently longed to pursue a civilizing mission and was suspended between America and Europe more than any other nation.

## ARGENTINA, THE LATIN EXCEPTIONALISM

Like the US, Argentina was exceptional, or at least it saw itself as such. This exceptional character had generated an exceptionalism—a sense of

mission, an irrepressible urge to rule, elevate, and shed light upon those who lay in darkness.<sup>6</sup> This was no surprise. From the time that Argentina had coalesced as a nation between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, it clearly manifested all the features of an exceptional history. It was young and prosperous; there was plenty of land and natural resources; migrants flocked by the millions to found a new society; and its endless frontier-edging South was an endless repository of myth. In fact, time and providence seemed to be on its side. The kind of civilization that Argentine exceptionalism imagined and claimed is what matters most in this study. It was, by definition, a European civilization, an American offspring of the European West. Young, rich, and white Argentina aimed to be the heir of and revive that old civilization; in so doing, it clearly opposed and challenged the American destiny that the Monroe Doctrine and US exceptionalism had envisioned for the entire hemisphere.

In sum, since its inception, the rise of the Argentine national myth had raised issues that transcended national borders since it posed philosophical, moral, and spiritual dilemmas with immediate and self-evident geopolitical, military, and economic implications for everyone. The central dilemma, in essence, was this: Was Latin America still a part of Europe, or was it already a part of America? If so, what kind of America? To put it more clearly: Was the civilization that the American Republics aimed to found supposed to find its source of inspiration in the European “West” that had in the past shaped its language, religion, and culture? Or was it instead supposed to get rid of that heavy burden and embrace the “new West,” that is, the civilization that the US had built north of the Rio Grande?

This dilemma had many implications since political and intellectual elites in Argentina and throughout Latin America looked for inspiration in the bourgeois, liberal civilization of France and Britain at the turn of the century—even more so during the interwar years, when a strong nationalist current spread across Latin America. Bourgeois civilization on both sides of the Atlantic was at odds in terms of interests and geopolitics; however, its core and ideals were the offspring of a common idea of the West as based on the Enlightenment, which the reactive nationalists certainly did not share. It is not possible to discuss in depth the nationalism that emerged in Latin America at that time;<sup>7</sup> suffice it to say that, while it aimed to create a new, original American civilization, it actually reflected a vehement antiliberal reaction comparable to the one that swept Western Europe in those same years. Consequently, the dilemma posed by this antiliberal reaction was not whether Latin American civilization should tilt toward Europe or the US, but rather, whether Latin American civilization should reflect the contours of the liberal West—it did not matter if the latter was to be European or American in character—or those of a different, older West. It was an endless ideological and political dispute carried out with the typical acrimony of a “clash of civilizations,” and the point was whether Latin America should embrace an Anglo-Saxon or a



Latin destiny. The former was meant as synonymous with a civilization shaped by materialism, immanence, and the individual, while the latter referred to a civilization shaped by spirit, transcendence, and community. The former was the liberal, individualist civilization generated by Anglo-Saxon Protestantism and the latter was the corporative, communitarian civilization informed by Latin Catholicism.

This detour helps to illustrate the worldview of Argentine nationalism, which Perón and his regime thoroughly and faithfully reflected during the aftermath of the war. In their world, different civilizations confronted each other, and the notion of the West evoked less a shared, univocal notion than a loose entity partitioned into Latin and Anglo-Saxon camps. In this context, Peronist exceptionalism, which could count on assets like peace, wheat, and the abundance of land vis-à-vis a war-torn world, aimed at rallying the “old West.”<sup>8</sup> The goal was twofold: avoiding the trap of the looming bipolar system and providing a natural outlet for Argentina’s mission of building a prosperous civilization in the Americas as an alternative to the Anglo-Saxon “new West.” Consequently, it is understood that Perón’s ambitious Euro-American foreign policy during the postwar years was based not only on relevant economic and geopolitical interests, but also on ideal aspirations that were at least as significant.

#### PERÓN AND THE OLD WEST: HISPANICITY, CATHOLICITY, LATINITY

The foreign policy outlook Perón continuously claimed as his trademark was the so-called “third position,” which he announced on 6 July 1947.<sup>9</sup> To some extent, it was the first of a long series of “third positions” that intended to undermine the structure of a bipolar system throughout the duration of the cold war. However, it was also the epilogue of the Fascist “third way,” which had intended to destroy the poles of Soviet communism and bourgeois democracy and build a “new order” during the interwar years. In essence, the “third position” aimed at finding a “third way” between the communist and the capitalist worlds, between the bloc that was taking shape under the leadership of the US and that being built around the Soviet Union. Although much has been written about this, there is still much more to be said.<sup>10</sup> For example, the “third position” responded to economic imperatives, that is, Perón’s goal to industrialize Argentina and rescue it from dependence on British and US capitalism by surrounding it with a sphere of economic influence. It also pursued specific geopolitical goals, i.e., containing the unprecedented hegemony that the US seemed to be able to project on all of Latin America during the aftermath of the war. Finally, it was also instrumental to obtaining the security manifestly desired without subscribing to alliances that might limit national sovereignty and eventually require Argentina to go to war against its will and interests.



More important, Perón's "third position" was and always wanted to be an ideological "third way." By defining it in these terms, Perón always claimed its close spiritual connection with a civilization that he intended to protect and lead, which the cold war was swallowing in the rising bipolar order. Perón and the nationalist current he led defined this civilization in both negative and positive ideological terms. The negative definition was based on its opposition against both Soviet communism, which was atheist and pursued the primacy of the state over the individual, and Anglo-Saxon Protestant capitalism, which was inevitably materialist and individualist and was reflected at the political level by liberal democracy. The positive definition was based on envisioning Argentina as the youngest and most ardent heir of Latin civilization, whose roots run deep in the Greco-Roman tradition, which Catholicism had spread via Spain on both sides of the Atlantic.<sup>11</sup> It was a civilization in which spirit prevailed over matter, "natural" communities were given preference over individuals, and the state and social order were based on the foundations of "organic democracy."

Perón's mindset and worldview as well as his idea of Argentina's role in the postwar world were well known. In October 1948, he reiterated what was by then a familiar concept:

Let's organize as the Slavs, the Germans, the Anglo-Saxons do, in order to occupy our seat in the world arena . . . Let's not forget that we are Latins, and those who are not Latins by blood, are Latins by religion, tradition, and customs, because, like us, they have inherited the great, holy, Christian civilization handed down by Latinity.

His "third way" therefore preached "the Christian sense of social justice" and brandished both the sword and the Gospel vis-à-vis the two imperialisms that intended to rule the world and establish either the exploitation of men by the state or the exploitation of men by men. He concluded by saying that once united, Latins "will form a strong, invincible bloc."<sup>12</sup> In fact, he had already told a Spanish delegation in June 1946 that "now that other races intend to exert world hegemony, only two Latin nations, Spain in Europe and Argentina in America, can uphold and carry on a spiritual mission."<sup>13</sup>

Catholicity, Latinity, and Hispanicity were the ideal and historical boundaries of the civilization that Perón's Argentina aimed at embodying. These concepts were by no means equivalent, and their boundaries were flexible; but Perón saw them as interchangeable tools of the same strategy. In fact, the Argentine government had directed its statement of July 1947 especially toward the Latin and Catholic nations in Europe and America as well as toward the Holy See, which was the necessary spiritual guide of this design. Evita Perón, the veritable ambassador of the "third position," toured the capitals of the Latin and Catholic countries of Europe, where she generously distributed promises as well as gifts. In the meantime, Perón's

government had started an ambitious and bold offensive at the political, economic, diplomatic, and ideological levels in Hispanic America. Finally, Perón was careful to give special consideration to this imagined community on both sides of the Atlantic among the countless nations in desperate need of wheat.

Was this a plausible strategy? Did such a Latin, Catholic, Hispanic West really exist? If so, how could this West carve out an autonomous role for itself in the bipolar world that was coming of age? And was it likely that this West would rally behind Perón? These are rhetorical questions since events followed a different course. However, they are not futile since they raise issues that were relevant at that time. They also outline hypotheses that, while easily dismissible now, were not unrealistic before the cold war order took shape. Taking such hypotheses seriously helps us to understand why and how quickly the “old West” eventually spilled over into the “new West” and was then swallowed up by it, even if it did not vanish altogether.

#### THE ILLUSION OF LATINITY

The US, which had more reasons than any other nation to fear Perón’s dream, was also the first to take it seriously as it was aware that such a dream was based not only on solid economic and political ambitions, but also on a profound, ancient historical legacy. In the eyes of the US, the old West envisioned by Perón was a replica of the ghosts of the European fascisms against which it had just fought, as if the war had been able to defeat fascism in Europe but not in the Americas, where it seemed to threaten hemispheric security once again. The US knew that Perón’s vision was not a mere *flatus vocis* and that it could in fact turn into a pain in the neck—no matter how strong and powerful the US was in the aftermath of the war, and no matter how far the Soviet Union was from American shores.<sup>14</sup> To the extent that the goal of the US was laying the foundations for Pan-Americanism, i.e., fulfilling the idea that the American hemisphere was not only a homogeneous geopolitical unit but also one civilization, then Perón’s emphasis on the difference between Latin and Anglo-Saxon America, divided by history and values, was a serious problem for two reasons: first, for Argentina’s power and influence within the American hemisphere; and second, for Argentina’s ability to evoke a sense of kinship among the European and American nations it was courting. Ambassador George Messersmith was sent to Buenos Aires in 1946 to heal the wounds opened between the US and Argentina because of the fierce clash between Spruille Braden and Perón during the campaign in which the latter had prevailed. Messersmith immediately grasped what was at stake since he wrote that it was necessary “to get the Argentine to turn her eyes away from Europe, to which they have always been directed in practically every field.”<sup>15</sup> This was quite a challenge, given Perón’s views; in fact, the consensus in Washington

did not change: Perón's goal, whether explicit or hidden, was to unite a Latin bloc against the US.<sup>16</sup>

For his part, Perón was determined to use all the weapons he had to pursue his Third Position strategy. Many countries were furthermore ready to consider it, at least until a bipolar system was a latent threat rather than a powerful reality, that is, at least until the proclamation of the Truman Doctrine. Perón tried to maneuver within the twists and turns of the international order that was beginning to take shape and to organize the old West according to his worldview. Indeed, his goal was to gather the Catholic and Latin nations of Europe and Latin America around himself and under the moral authority of the Holy See. He considered Catholicism to be the very "soul of our nationality"<sup>17</sup> and, more generally, of the West he wanted to represent.

Perón deliberately used wheat, which was abundant in Argentina and scarce in the starving and devastated postwar world, as an instrument of his policy. Both the press and foreign governments soon denounced Perón for using wheat to build a Latin bloc.<sup>18</sup> This was certainly true in Europe since Argentina granted favorable conditions to Spain and Portugal<sup>19</sup> as well as to Italy, France, and the Vatican. It was even truer in Latin America, where Argentina blatantly threatened to starve its more defiant neighbors: Chile, Brazil, and Peru. More important, while using this and other tools to enact his political goals, Perón also continuously referred to the ideological essence of the Third Position, i.e., the notion of the West that the Third Position entailed. Italy is a case in point: Not only did Perón grant aid to Italy, he also started a significant diplomatic campaign concerning the imminent peace treaties. He urged "all the Latin governments" in the Americas to mobilize for the struggling "spiritual mother."<sup>20</sup> The case of Spain, where Perón's appeal turned from Latinity to Hispanicity, was even more significant. For example, on 27 June 1947, when visiting Spain as a "sympathetic demonstration of Christianity," Evita Perón celebrated Francisco Franco's "greatness" and his ability to lead "the peoples of Hispanic stock" toward a bright future.<sup>21</sup> Perón's diplomatic and economic efforts to rescue Franco and his regime from isolation by including them in the "Catholic civilization" were so significant that many commentators hinted at a "small axis" stretching from Madrid to Buenos Aires.<sup>22</sup> If this ideological appeal was there in the cases of Spain, Italy, Portugal, and even France, it was even more apparent with respect to Latin American countries. Atilio Bramuglia, Perón's minister of foreign affairs, privately remarked in mid-1947 that the Latin nations in Europe and the Americas had to unite in order to prevent the partition of the world by Slavs and Anglo-Saxons.<sup>23</sup>

Against this backdrop, the call for Catholicity was the true ideological and spiritual cohesive factor of such a design since it was the only one that could hold together both Europe and America, both the extensive world of Latinity and the smaller world of Hispanicity. Perón often resorted to Catholicity in seeking an imprimatur from Pope Pius XII and the Vatican.

In fact, Perón dedicated much attention to the pope since he hoped to gain his approval as a defender of Catholic civilization. First, Perón tried to reassure the pope about the issue that the latter feared the most: the communist threat. He did so with words and deeds, for example, by offering the economic aid and food that Pius XII had been requesting to placate hunger and contain communism in Italy. Perón was always ready to remind the pope that his Argentina, and his ideology in particular, were the strongest bulwarks against communism, unlike the Anglo-Saxon powers, which he indicted as the true causes of the threat of social revolution because of their relentless capitalism.<sup>24</sup>

Had Argentina bitten off more than it could chew when it came to the “third position”? Was it a reflection of a distorted worldview based on the vitality of Latin and Catholic civilization, which in fact was declining? Of course it was. Yet between 1946 and 1947, that strategy was not groundless, even if it could never succeed. It was a dynamic, changing world. The old order was gone but the bipolar order was still to come, and the notion of civilization advocated by Perón was still relevant and familiar to many. This was certainly the case in Latin Europe. While not all the nations that were ideally part of Latin Europe considered or were in a position to consider Latinity and Catholicity as the grounds for a political bloc, virtually all of these nations still had reason to evoke it in their own ways. France saw it as the space in which it could play the role of a great power that could hardly be restored otherwise;<sup>25</sup> Italy hoped to find a role within it that its condition as a pariah of the new international order could certainly not guarantee;<sup>26</sup> Portugal viewed it as a political space in which it could preserve its regime;<sup>27</sup> and finally, Franco’s Spain considered it not only as the road to survival, but also as the way out of isolation and a tool with which it could restore its civilizing vocation in America.<sup>28</sup>

Similarly, the idea of gathering together the Latin and Catholic peoples in Europe and America and making them more influential within the international community attracted support throughout Latin America as well. In fact, quite a few influential Latin Americans were willing to support a “third way.” Some were disappointed by the lack of US aid to Latin America after wartime cooperation, while others feared the loss of their sovereignty within the hemisphere, in which US influence seemed to be undisputed. In this case, the ideological appeal was not so much based on Catholicity as on traditional nationalist motives that sounded very much like Perón’s and his quest for Latinity and Hispanicity as the ideal weapons to defend “political sovereignty, economic independence, and social justice.”<sup>29</sup>

Finally, during the aftermath of the war, even the Holy See had some reason to look with benevolence at the birth of a bloc of Catholic nations, to the extent that it contributed to a defense of Christianity and did not elicit hostility from the US, which Pius XII had long been considering as the necessary leader of the anticommunism front.<sup>30</sup> The Vatican actually cast doubts on Truman’s determination to accept such a leadership after

the war when the alliance between Washington and Moscow, while shaky, was still formally in place.<sup>31</sup> The Pope expressed to his visitors his anguish over what he saw as the imminent new war, the growth of communism in Italy and the attacks against the Church in areas under Soviet control. He was aware of the domestic obstacles Truman had to face as he built a closer relationship with the Vatican, and he knew that many Catholics were averse to the US since their intransigent culture saw it as the sinful nation of Protestant liberalism. For many influential prelates, the union of Latin Catholicity was the Church's strongest bulwark in a world being partitioned by non-Catholic powers and adopting godless institutions like the United Nations. It was therefore not surprising that the pope looked with some hope toward both the symptoms of a Catholic rebirth in Latin Europe and the quest to gather the Catholic nations together coming from Latin America.<sup>32</sup>

## BETWEEN OLD AND NEW WEST

We might consequently argue that the Hispanic, Latin, and especially, Catholic civilization Perón evoked as the basis of his Third Position was not just a wild fantasy. But could the generic spiritual or cultural common ground of this Latin West provide the foundations of a unifying political strategy? Could it provide the foundations for a true political bloc of nations that spread across both sides of the Latin Atlantic and was autonomous from the two poles of the new international system on the horizon? It is, in fact, apparent that this notion of the West was deeply flawed from the beginning and that the very notions of Hispanicity, Latinity, and Catholicity were conflicting in many respects, both in Europe and in the Americas. It is not relevant here to explain why Perón continued to believe and invest in this increasingly unrealistic and self-defeating idea; such an explanation implies a detailed study of his regime, in which the Third Position played an important role as a tool of ideological legitimization and popular mobilization. It is, however, relevant to analyze the reaction of its potential members to the idea of a Latin, Catholic bloc. From the early postwar years on, a sharp contrast emerged between words and deeds, dreams and reality, between the virtual image of a Latin West and a concrete reality that unveiled political and even spiritual vacuity.

In order to measure the likelihood of a quest for a Hispanic or Latin civilization, let us start from Latin Europe. To begin with, the idea of a Latin bloc led by Perón could not possibly have succeeded in France. Argentina had shipped food to France to contribute to its recovery, and the French government valued the potential opportunities stemming from a good relationship with Perón.<sup>33</sup> The hypothesis of a "third way" between the two rising cold war blocs also had some supporters in Paris. However, the idea that France would join Franco and Perón in a papal blessing, right

after its readmission among the victors had washed away its shameful wartime defeat, was totally unrealistic.<sup>34</sup> The consensus in Paris was clearly expressed by the French consul in Barcelona, who dismissed the Madrid-Buenos Aires axis and Perón's pretension to rise as the world leader of a Latin bloc as a "ridiculous comedy."<sup>35</sup> France was sensitive to the notion of Latinity and the opportunity to resort to it in order to strengthen its civilizing mission; besides, France was interested in Latin America. Yet it would have never mistaken or bartered Latinity with Hispanicity, and it would never have sacrificed the place it had just reestablished at the core of the new West rising between Europe and North America for the fantasy of a Latin "third way."

What was true for France was even truer for Italy. More than any other nation, Italy was tied to Argentina by blood kinship and by sheer need, and many within the Christian Democratic party and especially in the Vatican were attracted to Perón's "third way." Italy was also the major recipient of Argentine aid, and Perón would recall the sad scene of Ambassador Arpesani in tears as he begged for wheat for his starving nation.<sup>36</sup> Finally, Latinity and Catholicity were appealing arguments for the Italian diplomacy, which was anxious to regain its role and mission after the disaster of World War II. However, Italy, a defeated, unstable and starving nation, had lost its influence in Latin America and was waiting to know its future; it did not have much to gain from embarking on the third position, and it had much to lose from deserting the imminent Atlantic community. The sharp contrast between the historic importance attributed to Prime Minister De Gasperi's trip to Washington in early 1947 and the Italian government's cold reception of Eva Perón's visit shortly afterward was graphic evidence of the Italian stance. In fact, De Gasperi, like Schuman and Adenauer, was a moderate, democratic, and pro-Western leader at odds with the Hispanicism and Catholic corporatism of Franco and Perón; Truman, on his part, feared the *union sacrée* of the Latin peoples as a threat to the democratic Catholicism that was coming of age in Europe. It was no coincidence that a short time later Arpesani poked fun at the hollow pretensions of the Third Position, and the Italian government was careful to recommend to its representatives that they ignore it in order to prevent unpleasant disagreements with the US.<sup>37</sup> In the end, Italy too decided to carve out a niche in the new West that was taking shape in the Northern Atlantic and defected from the Latin West.

Portugal did the same, even if Salazar seemed to be the perfect candidate for the Third Position due to his Catholic corporatist regime and his fear that the US was planning to export liberalism and strip Portugal of its African colonies.<sup>38</sup> In fact, Perón had admired and courted him. However, Salazar, who was protected by Britain and the Holy See, soon jumped on the "new West" bandwagon and opened the Azores to US military bases in exchange for Portugal's admission to Marshall Plan aid and the Atlantic Alliance.<sup>39</sup>

Spain, which in 1947 was the last underpinning of the Third Position and the European outpost of the old West, was a different case. But rifts between Spain and Argentina were much deeper than the pompous Hispanicist rhetoric of the two regimes could show. There were economic issues, of course, especially from 1949 onward when the Argentine government had to face the end of plenty and deal with crisis.<sup>40</sup> But the other issues are more relevant to this study. Even Franco's Spain soon realized that, in light of its isolation and the rise of a bipolar system, the hypothesis of a Catholic "third way" was appealing in ideal terms but impracticable and even counterproductive in political terms.

First, the Catholic West that Franco had in mind was Hispanic rather than Latin. In his view, the borders of Perón's Third Position were too vague and flexible. Franco's Catholic West did not include France, which was fighting Hispanicism in the name of Latinity, or Italy, whose influence in Latin America was now negligible.<sup>41</sup> Furthermore, there were other differences between the regimes of Perón and Franco, especially the fact that the cold war had a different impact on the two sides of the Atlantic. Choosing neutrality in a possible new war was much more difficult for Spain than for Argentina, not only because of its geography, but especially because the cold war presented an opportunity for Franco while it spelled disaster for Perón. The cold war allowed Franco to preserve his regime and implicitly granted him the status of Western citizenship. More importantly, it allowed him to flaunt his unrelenting anticommunism and escape isolation. Conversely, in the eyes of Perón, the imminence of the cold war implied a sad premonition: the alignment of Latin America to a US-led sphere of influence. For both of them, however, the cold war seemed to be instrumental for spreading the new West to the European and American shores of the Atlantic and, consequently, to the disappearance of the old West, at least from reality if not from the realm of ideas. In fact, relationships with the US soon became the most sensitive thermometer of the state of the Catholic and Hispanic civilization evoked by Franco and Perón. Moreover, the thermometer's temperature started to rise as Spain moved closer to the US and persuaded the administration about its crucial contribution, in Franco's words, to "the defense of Christian civilization in the European West,"<sup>42</sup> and Perón's Latin West lost its last and most valuable European member.

Was the same trend underway in Latin America as well? Was the idea of a Latin or Hispanic civilization retreating vis-à-vis the rise of a new, more comprehensive notion of the West including Latins, Anglo-Saxons, Catholics, and Protestants? It is a complex and scarcely investigated issue. We have seen that Perón's "third way" and the idea of civilization it entailed found a responsive audience in postwar Latin America. At the same time, the rise of the bipolar world paved the way to including Latin America in the new West as well as the decline of the notion of a Latin West as alien or opposed to the Anglo-Saxon West. Latin America largely embraced the new West, notwithstanding various persistent forms of resistance that would



later return to the surface in different forms. Even a cursory look at the region during the postwar years is revealing, as it shows a new, improved relationship between the US and Mexico after the turbulence of the 1930s; the embryonic development of the privileged wartime partnership between Rio de Janeiro and Washington; a wave of harsh anti-Communist measures that swept the entire continent in the context of the cold war; a gradual shift towards Atlanticism on the part of nations like Peru and Venezuela, whose regimes had been considered as dangerous imitations of Perón's, from 1948 onward; and so on and so forth.

Latin American reactions to Perón's "third position" are the most telling indicator of the weakness of his call for a political union of the Latin peoples. In fact, Perón followed what he defined as a "San Martín-style policy"<sup>43</sup> in his attempt to unify and lead them. He resorted to promises and threats, carrots and sticks, capitals and retaliations in order to push his Latin American neighbors to form a community based on both spiritual values and interests and prepared to challenge the strong influence of the US.<sup>44</sup> However, the attraction the US exerted on most Latin American countries not only proved stronger and more persuasive than that exerted by Argentina, but it also benefited from the hostility against Argentina's policy. Since the options were either the powerful but distant US hegemony in the name of anticommunism or Perón's "third position"—the heir of Argentine exceptionalism—which was less powerful, less distant, and more intrusive, most Latin American nations did not hesitate to rally behind the former. They did so out of calculation or self-interest or because they feared the obvious appetite for power of Perón's Argentina.

Diplomatic archives are full of examples in this respect, especially in nations neighboring Argentina. Brazil and Chile strongly feared that Perón was ready to swallow its poorer, smaller neighbors and were ready to resort to Pan-American solidarity anytime the fear of a Latin bloc led by Buenos Aires reemerged.<sup>45</sup> Uruguay was traditionally at odds with its large, threatening neighbor and traditionally looks for protection from Brazil and the US.<sup>46</sup> In Peru, General Odría soon distanced himself from his Argentine brother-in-arms, who shipped wheat with parsimony and courted his political opponents, and chose to rely on Washington instead.<sup>47</sup> Even in Bolivia, where the nationalist revolution of 1952 seemed to pave the way towards a Perónist triumph, massive US economic intervention was crucial for securing its alliance.<sup>48</sup> The potential for success of Perón's strategy, i.e., the unification of Latin civilization, was also declining in the Americas since Catholics, Protestants, Latins, and Anglo-Saxons were all trying to cope with communism, obtain US benevolence, or contain the ambitions of Argentina in different ways. The sad decline of Perón's project shows that it had been an impracticable fantasy. By 1949, the Argentine economy was struggling due to the lack of US dollars that would have been required to turn the wild dreams of Perón's industrial plans into reality. Washington was the only option he had left, and the Third Position was turning into

a heavy straight jacket. Although Perón continued to evoke Latinity, there was no longer substance behind his rhetoric.

Latinity was the only argument left, as Hispanicity and Catholicity were both unserviceable by now: the former because Franco was successfully pursuing his march towards the new West, which he completed in 1953 with the signing of the Concordat with the Holy See and the bilateral agreements with the US;<sup>49</sup> the latter because the Vatican partnership in the Third Position, if it ever existed, vanished altogether. It is worth discussing this point in detail, given the importance of papal approval for Perón's plan to gather the Catholic civilization into one political unit. It was no coincidence that Perón had tenaciously sought this approval and never abandoned his posture as a Catholic statesman, at least in the early years of his tenure. The turning point in the Vatican's attitude toward Perón came early and was a consequence of the unfolding cold war, among other things. Since 1947, and especially in 1948, public anti-Communist measures by the US and private American reassurances to the Holy See led Pius XII to overcome his deep-rooted doubts about Truman's determination to lead the fight against communism, and to do so in the name of Christianity more than liberalism.<sup>50</sup> Consequently, Pius XII actively sought to rally the Catholic nations behind the US-led anticommunist front and warned that Catholicity was no excuse for standing in the sidelines. Those like Perón who did stand on the sidelines and, even worse, played on anti-Americanism, came to be seen in the pope's eyes as dangerous obstacles that not only divided and weakened the West in its fight against communism but also lent themselves to Soviet and communist maneuvers. Thus, the Holy See redirected a significant amount of energy away from the dead-end of the "third position" and toward the new West. The growing influence of the American Catholic Church within the Vatican as well as in Latin America also contributed to influencing Pius XII and undermining Perón's dichotomic view whereby Catholic and Latin America was at odds with Protestant and Anglo-Saxon America. Relations between Argentina and the Holy See cooled for this and other reasons, and they significantly worsened during the harsh conflict of 1954 and 1955.

## EPILOGUE: THE NEW WEST

Many observers, even those who staunchly advocated the adamant defense of Catholic civilization, had realized immediately that the new West would overshadow the old and deprive it of its vitality. Among others, the famous Mexican intellectual José Vasconcelos, a revered spokesman for Latin American Catholicism, celebrated the ideal dimension of Perón's Third Position but harshly criticized its practical effects, which made it "suspect" in terms of sharing intelligence with the Communist enemy and led him to wonder whether Argentina "would do its part on the side of Catholic and Western civilization."<sup>51</sup> Laureano Gomez, the Colombian conservative

leader who had long been dreaming of restoring the Catholic state, also now made a clear distinction between Hispanicity on the one hand and any specific political theory on the other.<sup>52</sup>

As the effects of World War II and the imminent cold war traced the contours of the new world, old words in Latin Europe, the Vatican, and Latin America were increasingly losing their ability to define reality. While the idea of a Catholic, Hispanic, or Latin civilization did not disappear, its meaning was now rhetorical rather than practical, celebratory rather than instrumental for a specific strategy or a concrete reality despite the political potential many had fantasized about and the ambitious strategy Perón had built upon it during the aftermath of the war. The material and spiritual foundations of the idea of a Latin West were eroded forever at the geopolitical, economic, and military levels, and to some extent, the cultural and ideological levels as well. The new notion of a Christian West was taking shape because of the new balance of power originated by the war and the clash of powers, ideologies, and civilizations that the bipolar system implied. The Christian West included Latins and Anglo-Saxons, Catholics and Protestants, and Western Europe and Latin America since it was able to reconcile centuries-old tensions and project them against one common enemy.

The powerful bridge built by history between the Latin shores of Europe and America was fading away while strong new bridges connected Latin Europe and the US on the one hand and Latin America and the US on the other, as if they were two different planets once joined together and now attracted by the same sun. Against this backdrop, the rise of the new notion of a Christian West can be seen as the semantic and ideological dimension of the latest and sharpest of many breaks that have gradually removed Latin America from Europe over the last two centuries, that is, from what Latin America had been from the sixteenth century onward, thus Americanizing it. This break came after the wars of independence in North and South America, the Spanish-American War of 1898, World War I, the effects of the crisis of 1929, and many others. The Americanization of Latin America should be understood as a Westernization, as a mere transition from a Latin European to a US-based West. The clash, or tension, between the civilizations of Latin America and Anglo-Saxon America did not end; in fact, it was very fierce in specific, controversial phases of the cold war. However, from that time onward, the anti-Americanism of Latin American nationalism put aside the old, meaningless evocation of abstract notions like Hispanicity and Latinity and drew inspiration from new words and symbols that originated in the vast semantic and ideological repository of the cold war.

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