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Striking a New Transatlantic Bargain

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BACK ON TRACK

THE RECENT WAR in Iraq has triggered the most severe transatlantic tensions in a generation, dividing Europeans and Americans from each other and themselves. Pundits proclaim daily the imminent collapse of three vital pillars in the institutional architecture of world politics: NATO, the UN, and even the EU. And yet some form of transatlantic cooperation clearly remains essential, given the vast mutual interests at stake. Where, then, should the Western alliance go now?

The Iraq crisis offers two basic lessons. The first, for Europeans, is that American hawks were right. Unilateral intervention to coerce regime change can be a cost-effective way to deal with rogue states. In military matters, there is only one superpower—the United States—and it can go it alone if it has to. It is time to accept this fact and move on.

The second lesson, for Americans, is that moderate skeptics on both sides of the Atlantic were also right. Winning a peace is much harder than winning a war. Intervention is cheap in the short run but expensive in the long run. And when it comes to the essential instruments for avoiding chaos or quagmire once the fighting stops—trade, aid, peacekeeping, international monitoring, and multilateral legitimacy—Europe remains indispensable. In this respect, the unipolar world turns out to be bipolar after all.

Given these truths, it is now time to work out a new transatlantic bargain, one that redirects complementary military and civilian instruments

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toward common ends and new security threats. Without such a deal, danger exists that Europeans—who were rolled over in the run-up to the war, frozen out by unilateral U.S. nation building, disparaged by triumphalist American pundits and politicians, and who lack sufficiently unified regional institutions—will keep their distance and leave the United States to its own devices. Although understandable, this reaction would be a recipe for disaster, since the United States lacks both the will and the institutional capacity to follow up its military triumphs properly—as the initial haphazard efforts at Iraqi reconstruction demonstrate.

To get things back on track, both in Iraq and elsewhere, Washington must shift course and accept multilateral conditions for intervention. The Europeans, meanwhile, must shed their resentment of American power and be prepared to pick up much of the burden of conflict prevention and postconflict engagement. Complementarity, not conflict, should be the transatlantic watchword.

THE DEATH OF ATLANTICISM?

THERE ARE TWO conflicting views about the seriousness of the current crisis in transatlantic relations. Pessimists maintain that differences in power, threat perceptions, and values are forcing an inexorable divergence in European and American interests. Optimists see recent troubles as the product of rigid ideologies, domestic politics, and missed diplomatic opportunities. Both views are partly right.

The pessimists emphasize the radically new distribution of power in the international system. The United States is less militarily dependent on allies than at any time in the past half-century. U.S. defense spending now surpasses that of China, France, Germany, India, Japan, Russia, and the United Kingdom combined, and the disparity will only grow, since the United States outspends Europe by a ratio of 5 to 1 on military research and development. Washington can now wage war confident of quick victory, low casualties, and little domestic fallout, and its ambitions have expanded accordingly. Two decades ago, the Reagan administration pursued “regime change” only in small countries and by proxy;

today, the Bush administration feels free to conquer a midsize power across the globe directly, with little allied participation.

American and European threat perceptions, meanwhile, have also diverged. The terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, combined with existing U.S. commitments involving oil and Israel, have led many Americans to view the war against rogue regimes, terrorism, and weapons of mass destruction (WMD) as a matter of vital national interest. But since the attacks were not directed at them, Europeans find the threat less pressing—and with large Muslim minorities at home and Islamic neighbors next door, they worry more about the spillover of Middle East instability. For Europe, the defining moment of the contemporary era remains the collapse of the Soviet empire, symbolized by the fall of the Berlin Wall on November 9, 1989; 11/9 is thus more important to Europeans than 9/11. Without major direct threats to their security, Europeans have felt free to disarm, cultivate their unique postmodern polity, and criticize the United States.

Europeans and Americans disagree about not only power and threats, but also means. As Robert Kagan and other neoconservatives argue, U.S. military power begets an ideological tendency to use it. In Europe, by contrast, weak militaries coexist with an aversion to war. Influenced by social democratic ideas, the legacy of two world wars, and the EU experience, Europeans prefer to deal with problems through economic integration, foreign aid, and multilateral institutions. These differences have become embedded in bureaucracy: the best and brightest American diplomats specialize in unilateral politico-military affairs, whereas their European counterparts focus on civilian multilateral organizations such as the EU.

These structural shifts do mark an important, and perhaps epochal, transformation in world politics. The heyday of Atlanticism, when the protection of Europe by U.S. strategic and European conventional forces was the centerpiece of the Western alliance, is gone for good. Americans and Europeans must accept new realities: the rise of new extra-European threats that are of varied concern to the allies, the American military ability to force regime change, and the deep European commitment to multilateral institutions and civilian power.

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UNNECESSARY ENMITY

TRANSATLANTIC OPTIMISTS are also right when they argue that the recent shifts need not lead inexorably to the collapse of NATO, the UN, or the EU. Historically, they note, transatlantic crises have been cyclical events, arising most often when conservative Republican presidents pursued assertive unilateral military policies. During the Vietnam era and the Reagan administration, as today, European polls recorded 80–95 percent opposition to U.S. intervention, millions of protesters flooded the streets, NATO was deeply split, and European politicians compared the United States to Nazi Germany. Washington went into “opposition” at the UN, where, since 1970, it has vetoed 34 Security Council resolutions on the Middle East alone, each time casting the lone dissent.

In the recent crisis, a particularly radical American policy combined with a unique confluence of European domestic pressures—German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder’s political vulnerability and French President Jacques Chirac’s Gaullist skepticism of American power—to trigger the crisis.

Most Europeans—like most Americans—rejected the neoconservative claim that a preemptive war against Iraq without multilateral support was necessary or advisable. Sober policy analysis underlay the concerns of the doubters, who felt that the war in Iraq, unlike the one in Afghanistan, was not really connected to the “war on terrorism.” Skeptics were also wary of the difficulties and costs likely to attend postwar reconstruction. No surprise, then, that most foreign governments sought to exhaust alternatives to war before moving forward and refused to set the dangerous precedent of authorizing an attack simply because the United States requested it.

In spite of these doubts about the Bush administration’s policies, however, underlying U.S. and European interests remain strikingly convergent. It is a cliché but nonetheless accurate to assert that the Western relationship rests on shared values: democracy, human rights, open markets, and a measure of social justice. No countries are more likely to agree on basic policy, and to have the power to do something about it. Even regarding a sensitive area such as the Middle East, both sides recognize Israel’s right to exist, advocate a Palestinian

state, oppose tyrants such as Saddam Hussein, seek oil security, worry about radical Islamism, and fear terrorism and the proliferation of WMD.

Indeed, these shared interests and values help explain why the trend over the past two decades has been toward transatlantic harmony. Europeans are hardly doctrinaire pacifists or myopic regionalists; the recent Iraq war is the first U.S. military action since the Reagan years to trigger significant European opposition. In the first Gulf War, for example, UN authorization unlocked European support, participation, and cofinancing. And the Kosovo intervention, although “preventive” and conducted without UN authorization, was unanimously backed by NATO.

The September 11 attacks themselves did little to change this situation. The celebrated *Le Monde* headline on September 13 proclaiming “Nous sommes tous Américains” (“We are all Americans”) and Schöder’s simultaneous pledge of “unconditional solidarity” were not just rhetoric. Diplomats invoked NATO’s Article 5 (its mutual defense clause) for the first time, and when the United States invaded Afghanistan in hot pursuit of al Qaeda, European governments lent their unanimous support. Since then, Europeans have provided more financial and peacekeeping support to Afghanistan than has the United States. The shared commitment to peacekeeping operations in Bosnia, Côte d’Ivoire, East Timor, Kosovo, Rwanda, and Sierra Leone suggests a consensus on humanitarian intervention, and the unanimous passage of Security Council Resolution 1441 regarding Iraq in November suggests that a similar consensus may exist on counterproliferation.

Even in the recent crisis, the vigorous rhetoric of some European governments was balanced by more tempered action. Many NATO members backed the United States outright. Setting aside a few regrettable episodes, such as the brief attempt to delay NATO defensive assistance to Turkey (easily overcome in a few days), it is misleading to portray France and Germany as having attempted to balance American power. Neither state took material action against Washington, nor even proposed multilateral condemnation of the U.S. position, as has happened many times in decades past. (Indeed, Germany and other countries informally aided the war effort.) Paris and Berlin simply withheld multilateral legitimacy and bilateral assistance for what they considered a rushed war, and encouraged others to do likewise.



CORBIS

*With friends like these: Jacques Chirac, Vladimir Putin,
and Gerhard Schröder, St. Petersburg, Russia, April 11, 2003*

Rigid positions, unfortunate rhetoric, and misguided diplomatic tactics on both sides, however, unnecessarily exacerbated the crisis. The Bush administration offered a variety of shifting rationales for the war, some of them dubious, and engaged in little of the patient, painstaking diplomacy that had underpinned the broad coalition of the first Gulf War. In the end, the U.S. case for war rested on an open-ended assertion of U.S. security interests, unconstrained by explicit doctrinal constraints, a firm commitment to multilateral procedures, or widespread trust in the American president. Given the Bush administration's flagrant repudiation of a series of multilateral agreements over the previous two years and its apparent lack of concern for foreign interests, other governments were loath to grant it a free hand.

Despite all this, a Security Council majority of 13 or 14 states could have been mustered to support a second war resolution had the Bush administration been willing to wait until June or September and then advance a procedurally proper case for war based on completed inspections. Even French military participation would have been

likely under such conditions. Yet Washington declined to make any substantive concessions on either its timetable or alternatives to war. Meanwhile, France, backed by Germany and Russia, seemed determined to oppose any hasty compromise as a matter of principle, only softening its position when it was too late.

The evidence of so much rigidity, bungling, and pique gives the optimists heart, since it suggests that the ultimate outcome was avoidable—and thus that future crises could be handled more smoothly. By going it alone, the United States lost the tens of billions of dollars in financial support that it managed to attract in the first Gulf War and complicated its military operations by missing a chance to create a second front. Postwar reconstruction is proving an embarrassing burden rather than a prized opportunity, and Iraq's future remains unclear. For France, meanwhile, the crisis undermined the two institutions in which it holds the greatest influence—the UN and the EU—and perhaps NATO as well. French opposition failed to slow the American move to war and thus undermined France's transatlantic and cross-Channel relations with little to show in return.

THREE PATHS

THE PESSIMISTS are right to note that the Iraq crisis highlighted the need for a new set of arrangements, structures that can deal with global issues but are appropriate to a world in which the United States and Europe possess different means, perceive different threats, and prefer different procedures. For their part, however, the optimists are right to argue that such crises are still manageable and that Western governments have a strong incentive to manage them. Wiser leadership on both sides, backed by solid institutional cooperation, could have avoided the transatlantic breakdown in the first place.

To prevent future ruptures, both sides must recognize that they benefit from the active participation of the other in most ventures. Only a frank recognition of complementary national interests and mutual dependence will elicit moderation, self-restraint, and a durable willingness to compromise. To this end, the allies could follow one of three paths. They can simply agree to disagree about certain issues, cordoning off areas of dispute from areas of consensus; they can begin to part

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ways militarily, with Europe developing its own, more autonomous force projection capabilities; or they can negotiate a new bargain, in which American military power and European civilian power are deployed together at targets of mutual concern. The first option is the simplest and least costly solution, but the last promises the greatest returns.

DECENT DIPLOMACY

THE EASIEST WAY to overcome the recent troubles would be for the United States and Europe to manage controversial high-stakes issues delicately while continuing to work together on other subjects that matter to both sides. This is how the Western alliance has functioned for most of its history—protecting core cooperation in European and non-military matters, while disagreeing about “out of area” intervention and, sometimes, nuclear strategy. Today this lowest-common-denominator policy should still unite nearly all Western leaders.

The transatlantic partnership remains the most important diplomatic relationship in the world, and so the allies have much to protect. Together, the United States and Europe account for 70 percent of world trade. The success of the Doha Round of global trade negotiations—which promises much for the developing world—could contribute greatly to long-term global security. Ongoing cooperation on intelligence and law enforcement is indispensable to successful counterterrorism. An expanded NATO is now widely recognized as a force for democracy and stability. Western governments have unanimously authorized a dozen humanitarian interventions over the last ten years. They work together on many other issues, including human rights, environmental policy, disease control, and financial regulation. Failure to cauterize and contain disputes such as that over Iraq threatens all of this cooperation, as would any deliberate U.S. strategy of trying to weaken or divide international organizations like the UN, the EU, or NATO.

The challenge that remains, of course, is just how to depoliticize controversial high-stakes issues such as preventive intervention. The simplest way to do so would be for the United States to adopt a less aggressively unilateral approach, trying to persuade or compromise with its allies rather than simply issuing preemptory commands. Fortunately, since this policy would appeal to any centrist U.S. administration,

American strategy is likely to move in this direction over the long term. Unless senior officials of the Bush administration undergo a radical conversion on the road to Damascus, however, such a course is unlikely to emerge anytime soon.

Restoring diplomatic decency would be an easier first step. The transatlantic partners should commit to consulting quietly and comprehensively before launching public attacks in the media. Similarly, reprisals, whether they take the form of U.S. threats against Europe or French threats against small central European democracies, are ineffective and inflammatory, particularly when a domestic majority supports the offending policy.

More fundamentally, the Iraq crisis suggests that both sides harbored unreasonable expectations about the UN Security Council, fueling an escalating spiral of rhetoric and diplomatic threats. Contrary to what many Europeans wish, the Security Council was not initially designed, and cannot function today, to block a permanent member's military action against a perceived security threat. And contrary to what some Americans wish, U.S. military assistance to Europe (whether in World War II, in the Cold War, or today) does not oblige Europeans to offer blanket authorizations for unlimited U.S. military activity anywhere. Were the Security Council to find itself deadlocked again, therefore, the prudent (and, arguably, normatively appropriate) course would be to drop the matter and allow discussions to move ahead in other forums, as was done with the debate over Kosovo. Absent a clearer threat, however, this implies that the United States would act almost alone—likely failing to persuade even staunch allies such as Blair's United Kingdom.

FROM EUROPE TO MARS

MANY WILL FEEL that mere diplomatic flexibility is an insufficient response to the problems at hand. A parade of pundits—American neo-conservatives, traditional NATO analysts, European federalists, and French Gaullists alike—have recently promulgated a new conventional wisdom: that the rearming of Europe is the alliance's only hope. Their logic is simple. To get the United States to listen to its concerns, Europe needs to develop true power projection capabilities. Only an alliance of equals can work, and military power is the only coin that matters.

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Interestingly, given their supposedly “Venusian” tendencies, many Europeans find defense cooperation attractive. Nearly 75 percent of the European public favor the notion, and politicians from Tony Blair to Jacques Chirac and German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer have reasons to advocate it. The governments of Belgium, France, Germany, and Luxembourg—the same group that impeded NATO support to Turkey—recently called a summit to discuss the creation of a group to coordinate European defense procurement, establish a common military headquarters, and construct a unified force.

Little has come of schemes for a powerful European military, however—and little will. A common European force with the capacity to wage high-intensity, low-casualty war around the globe remains a pipe dream. Whatever they may tell pollsters, European publics will not tolerate the massive increases in military spending required to come anywhere near the American level, and more efficient use of current European resources, although desirable, will achieve only modest gains.

Even if Europeans could agree on the funding and the mission for such a unified force, moreover, new transport aircraft, satellites, and soldiers would not add up to a viable European alternative to U.S. unilateralism. For what would the Europeans do with their new power? Deploy it against the United States? Launch pre-preventive interventions? Even if they sought simply to reduce European dependency on U.S. security guarantees, the result would only be to encourage the redeployment of even more American forces outside of Europe. In the end, the best way for Europe to play a world role is to play with, not against, the United States.

A more pragmatic variant of remilitarization would be to develop a European high-intensity power projection capability within NATO. The alliance’s members have already pledged to create a response force: a European expeditionary unit of 21,000 troops capable of executing a full range of high-intensity missions. If European troops are able to fight alongside Americans, it is argued, their political leaders will get more of a say in U.S. grand strategy. Some foresee such a force, increased in size tenfold, as the Germans and others have proposed, as suitable for intervention in areas of European interest—such as North Africa, for example—where the United States might eschew involvement. Had the Europeans landed such a force in the Persian

Gulf late last year but conditioned its eventual engagement on multi-lateral authorization, some analysts believe the United States would have been compelled to compromise.

A robust European force of this kind would certainly help matters. But does the Bush administration value European military participation so much that it would moderate its behavior to secure it? Unlikely. Neither NATO nor the United States itself really needs more high-intensity military forces, and the United States, seeking to deflect political pressure and prevent a repetition of the interallied “war by committee” in Kosovo, will not permit itself to become dependent on others for essential materiel. In sum, a high-intensity European force, inside or outside NATO, may make for evocative (albeit expensive) symbolic politics, give the Europeans a more glamorous NATO role, and dampen U.S. complaints about burden-sharing, but it would not change the underlying strategic calculus on either side of the Atlantic.

EXPLOITING ADVANTAGES

Is EUROPE then doomed to play second fiddle, with the only question being how gracefully it accepts its subordinate status? No. Ultimately, proposals to remilitarize Europe are unproductive, because they presume that military force is the predominant instrument of interstate power. This neoconservative nostrum is a poor guide to modern world politics, as well as being sharply at odds with the values most Europeans profess.

A better approach to rebuilding the transatlantic relationship would aim at reconceiving it on the basis of comparative advantage, recognizing that what both parties do is essential and complementary. Europe may possess weaker military forces than does the United States, but on almost every other dimension of global influence it is stronger. Meshing the two sets of capabilities would be the surest path to long-term global peace and security. Each side would profit from being responsible for what it does best. Complementarity is the key to transatlantic reconciliation.

The United States has already demonstrated in Iraq that military force can be remarkably effective. Yet the war’s aim was not just to drive Saddam from power but also to establish a much better regime in his place. Some in Washington still believe that doing so will be

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easy; they assume that a two-year occupation, modest aid, a quick handoff to an interim government, and a postwar economic boom based on sales of privatized oil will spark a rapid economic miracle, similar to that which occurred in West Germany after World War II. Democracy, reconstruction, and development will be self-fulfilling, self-financing, and self-legitimizing—and will make Iraq into a new reliable ally.

Few outside the White House, the Pentagon, and the American Enterprise Institute share this optimism, however. Even the postwar German miracle was based on massive, long-term U.S. assistance, and Iraq is less promising terrain. Skeptics point to Afghanistan as a cautionary tale. Indeed, its example is chastening: warlords have reasserted themselves, government ministers have been assassinated, internal security has collapsed to the point where humanitarian aid no longer reaches many regions, the country has reemerged as the world's largest exporter of opium, the battle against al Qaeda has stalled, and Taliban forces are resurfacing in a half-dozen provinces.

If rosy forecasts for Iraq prove incorrect, will the United States match its devastating military force with equally efficacious civilian engagement? Unlikely. Not since the wake of World War II has the United States forged civilian and military means into a coherent geopolitical strategy. In Afghanistan, the United States pursued a “fire and forget” policy: few peacekeepers, no trade concessions, and meager foreign assistance. A recent Carnegie Endowment study reveals that of 16 U.S. efforts at nation building over the past century, only four of them resulted in sustained democracy: Germany, Grenada, Japan, and Panama. The odds are against Iraq's becoming the fifth.

The best way to buck those odds would be for the Bush administration to reverse course and encourage far greater European participation in Iraq and for the Europeans to rise to the challenge. Why? Because with regard to each of the key policy instruments that could make a difference—trade, aid, peacekeeping, monitoring, and multilateral legitimation—Europeans are better prepared than Americans to do what has to be done. Here the central institution is the EU as much as NATO.

Arguably the single most powerful policy instrument for promoting peace and security in the world today, for example, is the ultimate in market access: admission to or association with the EU trading bloc. New EU applicants and associated nations perform well economically,

and in country after country, authoritarian, ethnically intolerant, or corrupt governments have lost elections to democratic, market-oriented coalitions held together by the promise of EU membership. Although actually joining the union is an immediate option only for those nations in closest proximity, association with the EU remains an option for many. Association agreements already encompass Russia, much of the rest of the former Soviet Union, Israel, and many Arab states in the Middle East and North Africa—all of which trade more with Europe than with the United States. Holding out such a carrot to postwar Iraq would create a strong incentive for good behavior.

Foreign assistance, meanwhile—whether in the form of humanitarian aid, technical expertise, or support for nation building—reduces immediate human suffering and bolsters peaceful development. Here, too, Europe is the civilian superpower, dispensing 70 percent of global foreign aid and spreading its largess far more widely than the United States. How much aid will ultimately be needed to rebuild and stabilize Iraq is unclear, but oil revenues and U.S. aid will cover only a fraction of the costs, which include basic reconstruction, essential subsistence and infrastructure support, debt payments and reparations, and hand-outs to the nearly 50 percent of the population previously dependent on the public sector.

If European officials, nongovernmental organizations, and citizens are not given some direct stake in the success of Iraqi reconstruction, however, much less aid will be forthcoming. This is one of the reasons why it is so important to bring the UN into the process, having it endorse the establishment of a civilian administration, authorize participation of UN relief and reconstruction agencies, and support the deployment of a multilateral security and stabilization force. Recent Anglo-American proposals to the Security Council represent a good start. Involving prominent Europeans in the everyday management—people such as Bernard Kouchner, the pro-war French humanitarian activist who served as chief administrator of Kosovo from 1999 to 2001—would further help invest Europe's prestige (and its unmatched expertise) in Iraqi reconstruction.

Maintaining order and internal security will be a crucial challenge in Iraq, and here again Europe is the dominant player. Current and prospective EU members contribute ten times as many soldiers to

peacekeeping and policing operations as does the United States. In trouble spots around the globe, European nations take the lead, as did the United Kingdom in Sierra Leone, France in Côte d'Ivoire, Italy in Albania, and Germany in Afghanistan. In Kosovo, 84 percent of the peacekeepers are non-American, as are over half of those in Afghanistan. Even optimistic scenarios estimate that two to three years will be required to establish an Iraqi army, and the U.S. leadership manifestly lacks enthusiasm for being tied down to costly and perhaps dangerous peacekeeping. The United States should thus dust off a German proposal made back in February to have NATO formally take over peacekeeping duties in Afghanistan, and throw in Iraq as well. In expanding these peacekeeping capabilities, much more so than in high-intensity missions, EU proposals for greater coordination of military procurement and deployments will be helpful.

Multilateral monitoring of disarmament and human rights, furthermore, is generally more effective and more legitimate than unilateral efforts. Multilateral measures are also less sensitive politically, for the monitored party has less reason to suspect the inspectors' motives. There is now a considerable bipartisan consensus in the United States on the desirability of a lead role for NATO or the UN in securing and destroying Iraq's weapons of mass destruction and production facilities. The policing of human rights in transitional Iraq is important as well. Europe has extensive regional experience at conditioning aid on monitoring and is the major supporter of the multilateral institutions with serious inspection capability.

The most reliable evidence of Iraq's weapons programs came from the years of UN-sponsored inspections, and even the Bush administration now concedes that the inspectors forced Saddam to dismantle, destroy, or displace many, and perhaps nearly all, of his WMD. One of the unexpected implications of the Iraq crisis is that although neither UN inspections nor American coercive diplomacy work very well alone, they can be extremely effective as complementary elements of a "good cop, bad cop" routine. This tactic would have been more effective had Europe been willing to sponsor thousands of "coercive" inspectors, a promising avenue for future EU collaboration.

Postconflict monitoring under appropriate multilateral auspices will be equally important, since American credibility has been undermined

by prewar errors and exaggerations. Most important of all, the transatlantic commitment to strict controls over the use of nuclear, biological, and chemical materials might be harnessed to promote a stronger peacetime counterproliferation regime focused particularly on trafficking in WMD materials.

Finally, in gathering international legitimacy—the persuasive influence Harvard’s Joseph Nye terms “soft power”—for confrontations with rogue states, European involvement is crucial. In 1991, President George H.W. Bush was initially disinclined to move against Iraq through the UN, but he was advised that European countries would not back his efforts without a Security Council resolution. The result of his administration’s careful diplomacy was near unanimous Western support for the war, the unlocking of \$50 billion to \$60 billion in cofinancing, and near universal logistical cooperation from neighboring countries. The second Gulf war, by contrast, was opposed by large majorities throughout the world, and the most important reason for that appears to have been the lack of final, explicit UN authorization. Absent such approval, the allies offered no financial contributions, and important regional actors such as Turkey withheld vital support for military operations.

Gaining international legitimacy now for the postwar occupation will be just as crucial, and the participation of the UN and Europe remains the best way to achieve it. By laundering its power through various multilateral mechanisms, the United States would minimize the potential for violent popular backlash directed at it while still maintaining critical behind-the-scenes influence (as in Afghanistan). From this perspective, the gravest danger to coalition policy in Iraq now is not European opposition but European apathy, for without multilateral legitimation, national parliaments are likely to be stingy, and the United States will be left holding the bag.

AFTER IRAQ

FOR ALL THESE REASONS, the reconstruction of Iraq and the reconstruction of the transatlantic alliance should proceed hand in hand, with the former serving as a template for the latter. A new transatlantic bargain based on civil-military complementarity would

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reflect hardheaded national interests. Europe needs American military might; America needs European civilian power. Each side has reason to value a predictable relationship that will induce moderation, self-restraint, and greater accommodation in advance of military action. If this is indeed what U.S. policymakers seek, they would do well to avoid flagrant violation of multilateral norms and instead start accumulating political capital for future crises. For their part, Europeans should acknowledge the effectiveness of U.S. military power and support ongoing efforts to establish a flexible EU foreign policy that better coordinates civilian, peacekeeping, and military decision-making. Now is the time to commit to this realistic goal.

If things go smoothly—Iraq improves, Europe invests in civilian and peacekeeping instruments, and the United States prefaces future military interventions with measured consultation—a new transatlantic consensus could swiftly be reestablished.

Should Iraqi reconstruction falter, however, with Europeans staying on the sidelines and Americans sticking to their uncompromising and impatient military unilateralism, Western interests in the Middle East could be threatened. Even so, the transatlantic partners could grasp the least bad option of agreeing to disagree on controversial issues while deflecting possible collateral damage to other common interests. Either way, the diplomacy of the last year stands as a guide for what to avoid—and what to seek—the next time around. 🌐