

CHAPTER ONE

PAX AMERICANA

The Shock of 9/11

IN THE BEGINNING were Paul Wolfowitz, Robert Kagan, and their soul mates. Or so it seemed, once the U.S. deputy secretary of defense announced the death of permanent coalitions like the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) at the high-powered Munich Security Conference in February 2002 and the relatively unknown policy wonk published his essay on “Power and Weakness” a few months later and captivated the chattering classes.¹

U.S. Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, who skipped the previously mandatory conference to pursue the al Qaeda terrorists who had been identified as the 9/11 perpetrators, had already declared that from now on the mission would determine the coalition, and not vice versa. The implications had not sunk in, however; in late 2002 and early 2003 European reproaches about the American failure to accept the major help NATO had offered right after 9/11 tended to treat this U.S. lapse as an oversight that could perhaps be corrected if only the Americans and Europeans reasoned together.² In Munich, however, Wolfowitz repeated Rumsfeld's phrase and made it brutally clear that the snub to NATO was intentional, despite the alliance's unprecedented invocation of Article 5 of its founding treaty in branding the 9/11 attack on America an attack on all NATO members.³ He brushed aside European worries about Bush's ignoring of the Europeans in the State of the Union address a few days earlier and the president's depiction of Iraq, Iran, and North Korea as an “axis of evil.”⁴ He did not bother to address the other administration actions that had just aroused European apprehension: the unilateral abrogation in Decem-

ber of the three-decade-old Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty in order to build an anti-ballistic missile shield for the United States—and the concurrent agreement with Russia on cuts in nuclear warheads, which, for the first time in such treaties, would be not destroyed but simply stored, revocably. He gave no hint of the secret Defense Department policy review that was considering use of nuclear weapons against the three “axis” states.⁵ Nor did he hint at the secret “Team B” intelligence unit that he, Rumsfeld, and Undersecretary of Defense for Policy Douglas Feith had set up in the Pentagon in October to pressure the regular intelligence agencies into more hawkish evaluations of Iraqi and other threats.⁶ And if Wolfowitz had any compunction, as a mere deputy secretary, about lecturing a room full of European defense ministers and other movers and shakers, he betrayed no sign of it. Nor did the visiting American senators and congressmen leave any doubt that they had come to judge the European parliamentarians and governments represented in Munich—and were finding them wanting.

Indeed, far from according the Europeans any credit for the spontaneous alliance solidarity after 9/11, Wolfowitz went on the offensive in Munich, berating the continental Europeans for lagging far behind America in the technological revolution in military affairs (RMA), fielding inefficient armed forces, and not being able to fight alongside the United States. In future operations Washington would pick and choose its assistance from NATO and various bilateral forces inside and outside NATO. This was the “toolbox” approach to the alliance, in the term that would come into vogue. NATO allies would have no privileged position and would certainly not be allowed to veto targets or tactics, as the United States said they had done in the Kosovo war. Moreover, the sly Europeans were warned not to provoke the United States by trying to extract influence over Washington’s decisions as a price for any military contributions they might offer and America might accept.

As the repercussions from the Munich conference were still reverberating, Kagan acknowledged that Rumsfeld and Wolfowitz might not always be the administration’s “most effective salesmen on this issue. Their evident disdain for the NATO allies, and for world opinion in general, has unnecessarily hurt Bush’s cause abroad.”⁷

In his essay Kagan was somewhat more tactful, and more cerebral, but he delivered the same message about America’s ordained role in holding the

barbarians far from the gates in the new world disorder after 9/11 and about the gratitude and loyalty others owed the United States for this service.

As British diplomat Robert Cooper subsequently noted, there are gifted authors who, with exquisite timing, capture a partial truth at a point when their aperçu seizes the public imagination.⁸ Yale's Paul Kennedy had done so at a rare moment of American self-doubt and pessimism in the 1980s, when he popularized the notion of "imperial overstretch"⁹—and was immediately rebutted by Harvard's Joseph Nye in his exploration of America's extraordinary "soft power,"¹⁰ as well as by America's irrational financial exuberance in the 1990s and political exuberance in the twenty-first century. Francis Fukuyama had pulled off the feat with his essay "The End of History" as the Soviet Union collapsed and the cold war dissipated.¹¹ Kagan now found comparable resonance as wounded Americans groped to make sense of their new universe after 9/11.

Simply put, his thesis was that the benevolent American hegemon was and should be unilaterally assertive around the globe, because its singular power let it bestride the world like a colossus. Americans were tough Hobbesians; Europeans were timid Kantian appeasers. Americans were from Mars; Europeans were from Venus. The Europeans, armed with no more than a knife, shunned confrontation with the bear in the forest; Americans, sensibly armed with a gun, aggressively sought confrontation to eliminate the ursine threat. Inhabitants of the eastern shores of the Atlantic Ocean, though dependent on American protection, sought to block the exercise of American might only because they themselves lacked power. So different have the two partners become, Kagan concluded, that it is time "to stop pretending that Europeans and Americans share a common view of the world, or even that they occupy the same world."¹²

Suddenly there was a Big Idea to end the floundering for a new paradigm for post-Soviet foreign policy. America's war on terrorism, declared hours after the Twin Towers collapse, now had a coherent intellectual underpinning. Antiterrorism, holding open a policy option of preventive war (or "preemptive" war, as it would come to be labeled inaccurately),¹³ would be the new organizing principle. The United States should defend itself by combating terrorism around the globe—and take prudent measures to ensure that no other power could ever rise to challenge its supremacy. For neoconservatives this approach was plain common

sense.¹⁴ For many other post-9/11 readers, by contrast, Kagan's parsimonious explanation was a revelation. Within weeks his essay was a mandatory reference in every public debate.

There was no lack of alternative, if less popular, frameworks of analysis. Purists disputed Kagan's interpretation of Immanuel Kant, if not necessarily the 1990s' metamorphosis of Kant's eighteenth-century theory of a liberal peace into a twentieth-century theory of peace between democracies.¹⁵ Various other critics noted that even if the British, for the sake of argument, were classified as honorary Americans rather than Europeans, this still left the very European French exhibiting quite martial characteristics. They recalled too British prime minister Tony Blair's desperate campaign—against Washington's stiff resistance—to get the United States to put boots on the ground in the Kosovo war in 1999. (To this Kagan supporters retorted that wars for national interest, and not wars for feel-good humanitarian causes, were the issue; that President Bill Clinton was hardly the kind of red-blooded American they were extolling; and that, anyway, when they said "Europeans," this might best be understood as a code word for their real enemies, the Democrats.)

More analytically, Karl Kaiser, outgoing director of studies at the German Council on Foreign Relations, sees the basic tension of our era not as a contradiction between American power and European weakness, but rather as one between American dominance and the inherent interdependence of globalization.¹⁶ Nye, continuing his exploration of soft power, notes that while Kagan's revered national military might may be the crucial determinant on the first dimension of power, more diffuse transnational economic power reigns on the second dimension—and even superwarriors are of limited use against terrorists on the third dimension of nonstate actors with access to fantastic destructive power in a globalized world.¹⁷ Javier Solana, the European Union's High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy, picks up the same point in stating, "Getting others to want what you want can be much more efficient in getting others to do what you want"—and pleading for a marriage of Mars and Venus that could lead to the birth, as in the original myth, of the beautiful goddess Harmonia.¹⁸

Simon Serfaty, veteran director of the Europe Project at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, finds that a "more relevant"

dichotomy than Kagan's power/weakness is power/order.¹⁹ Philip Gordon, director of the Center on the United States and France at the Brookings Institution, also contests Kagan's assumptions, arguing that "structure is not destiny" and the real issue is instead players' deliberate choices of "strategic culture." Gordon further protests against Kagan's conclusion "that the advent of the most socially conservative and internationally unilateralist administration in Washington in more than twenty years—after the most closely contested election in history—represents some fundamental shift in 'American' culture or values."²⁰

Robert Cooper and Harvard's J. H. H. Weiler also part company with Kagan in viewing the differential transatlantic evolutions of the past half century through a far more pro-European lens. Cooper, now chief adviser to High Representative Javier Solana, spends much of his time prodding EU members to take the new threats more seriously and to boost their defenses, in an effort that Kagan would approve. Yet he also appreciates Europe's new art of cooperation—as measured most dramatically, he notes, in the routine interference by EU members in one another's internal affairs—which has rendered obsolete the continent's warring habits of earlier millennia.²¹ Notably, years before September 11, 2001, he foreshadowed the problems that would confront the kind of postmodern, anti-war European states when their civilized nonviolence collided with the "premodern" stratum of often warring and/or failing states (like Afghanistan), or even "modern" nationalist states (like China and the United States). In such cases double standards, including even tolerance for preemptive military action against premodern tyrants, might be needed, he suggested.

Weiler addresses one aspect of Cooper's institutionalized outside interference in domestic affairs in focusing on an element of Europe's post-World War II consensus system that baffles most Americans—the willingness of independent states to "pool" their sovereignty in the conviction that each is too small to solve environmental, financial, and other problems in a globalized world, and that they therefore gain more control over their fate when they work together. Never, in the American vocabulary, would the positive verb "pool" replace the negative concept of "surrendering" sovereignty to a supranational entity. Weiler began his studies by working the puzzle of why powerful governments have for decades volun-

tarily accepted the authority of a European Court of Justice with no enforcement arm of its own—even to the point of letting national laws be overruled.²² He ended by applying the logic of Albert O. Hirschman’s protean concept of voice and exit to the post–World War II evolution of European integration. Weiler observed that the six countries that signed the 1957 Treaty of Rome initially thought their pact was revocable and that whenever the cost-benefit balance turned unfavorable, they could leave the European Community. What they and the other nations that more than doubled EU membership by the mid-1990s found out again and again, however, was that once they had begun profiting from the expanded possibilities that the European Community/European Union (EC/EU) conferred, the costs of “exit” were always too high, whatever the frustrations. Each time they rediscovered this verity, they returned to intramural negotiations with renewed vigor, demanding the alternative of enlarging their own voice within the evolving system and thus deepening European integration.²³

9/11 and the Neoconservatives

In the first decade after the end of the cold war the contrasting European and American political styles that had existed since the end of World War II did not matter very much. But with 9/11—and especially with Wolfowitz’s and Kagan’s articulation of the hardened American position in early 2002—the diverging transatlantic instincts came into increasing conflict. As has been noted often, Europeans grossly underestimated the psychological impact of the 9/11 attacks in triggering that fierce American patriotism that focused America’s combined sense of victimhood and unassailable power into a can-do global war on terrorism.

Just as important, however—this the Europeans realized only much later—they initially also misjudged the impact on policy in the new American climate of the passionate, disciplined, and brilliant hawks like Wolfowitz and Kagan who had been toiling for a decade to move American foreign policy precisely in this more Hobbesian, Martian direction.

Here a brief digression is necessary because of the fierce polemics about the neoconservatives that arose later. A clear distinction must be made between those battles of 2003 and the actual policy landscape as the actors perceived it in early 2002. The later spats raged, first, over the arcane issue of whether Leo Strauss was or was not the intellectual father of the neo-

conservatives, and whether this pre–World War II German émigré and influential professor of philosophy at the University of Chicago was or was not protofascist. The second issue was whether the neoconservatives “hijacked” the Bush administration’s foreign policy, or whether they have simply been “demonized” by their adversaries who accuse them of having done so. The first topic was utterly irrelevant to the substance of American foreign policy, the second only marginally relevant. But together they have crowded out substantive debate to a remarkable extent.

Clearly the participants in the first quarrel relished reviving, in a new form, America’s old left-right ideological wars and rival conspiracy theories of the 1980s. And a few German and British intellectuals joined in the fun of rehashing all the old arguments about Strauss and the conservative attack on liberalism in Germany in the late 1920s and early 1930s. These exchanges hardly touched on concrete issues of foreign policy in the twenty-first century, though.

The second quarrel was different. If, on the one hand, dissenters from Bush’s tough line in foreign policy could establish that the folksy American president had been duped by neoconservatives in his administration (as one version had it), then they could perhaps lure more voters to their point of view without crossing swords with the popular president. On the other hand, if the neoconservatives could cast false accusations as the main issue—and thus turn themselves into victims of slander rather than triumphant victors in the vicious ongoing interagency feuds—they could insist that their position was not a partisan one, but simply the position of all Americans. Any opposition would then be not only anti-neoconservative, but also anti-American. And if Bush hard-liners could imply that their critics blamed the foreign policy direction on “neocons,” using the term as a negative code word for Jews, they could brand these critics as both anti-American and anti-Semitic. The spin mattered.²⁴

Whatever the spin, it was probably not until late 2002 that European mandarins as a whole sensed the post–9/11 sea change in American policy from status-quo guardianship of stability as practiced during the cold war to revolutionary destabilization of the existing order to create a better world.²⁵

The lag in European perceptions of the American shift could be explained in part by the strong inertia of habit. Candidate George W. Bush

had, of course, never hinted at any neoconservative radicalism in an electoral campaign in which foreign policy featured seldom and only negatively. Perhaps the best-known preview of a Bush policy was the scorn of future National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice for nation building in her gibe that the Eighty-Second Airborne doesn't escort children to kindergarten.²⁶ Europeans had admired the subtlety and delicacy with which President George H. W. Bush had handled German unification and the tectonic changes at the end of the cold war, and they expected the same pragmatism and finesse from his son and his son's advisers, all veterans of the Bush *père* administration. They anticipated that a president with no overseas experience, winner of fewer popular votes than his opponent, and installed in office by a five to four decision of the Supreme Court, would necessarily have to govern in the middle. They had been reassured by Bush's assertion in the campaign, "If we are an arrogant nation, [others will] view us that way, but if we're a humble nation, they'll respect us."²⁷ The Europeans further counted on a repetition of the familiar pattern, in which a new American president, taking office innocent of foreign policy, in his first year opts for continuity, especially in transatlantic relations. And they knew that Wolfowitz had been rebuked by Bush's chief of staff at the Camp David war council four days after 9/11 for pushing, out of turn, the radical idea of invading Iraq.²⁸

European Reactions

The potential split of the two sides of the Atlantic into what would become a titanic clash over the Iraq war was thus initially hidden by the overwhelming western solidarity with the United States in the wake of 9/11. All feared that their own arduously constructed open, trusting societies would now be targeted by that ultimate global nongovernmental organization of suicidal assassins.²⁹ All pulled together instinctively, not only to declare the 9/11 attack an attack on all NATO members, but also to intensify cooperation among intelligence and police agencies. The British, who had maintained a special Anglo-American intelligence relationship over the years in any case, continued their ties and were especially prized for their analysis. The Germans could fill in some gaps in human intelligence, as distinct from signals intelligence, in Iran and Afghanistan. More immediately, they also gave Washington a clue that led to the arrest of Zacarias

Moussaoui, the alleged twentieth hijacker connected with the 9/11 suicide attacks (even if the Germans suspected that the American agencies already had the same raw intelligence, but were simply too big to have noticed the clue in their overload of data). Even so, the Federal Intelligence Service had to fend off very public American blame for Hamburg's inadvertent hosting of the al Qaeda plotters before the 9/11 strike; its defense consisted primarily of reminding American accusers that it was the United States, not Germany, after all, that let the conspirators receive crucial pilots' training, despite various early warnings.

In further cooperation, the Europeans are allowing American FBI, Coast Guard, or other agents in European ports to inspect containers that are bound for the United States, with no complaints about infringement of sovereignty. Berlin further, eventually, worked out a way around its legal ban on extraditing suspects to any country with a death penalty by getting assurances that any testimony of terrorists so extradited could not be used to secure a death sentence. The fledgling European Central Bank joined with the U.S. Federal Reserve, the Treasury Department, and Wall Street to inject liquidity into markets and contain the financial fallout from the catastrophe. They worked together as well to choke off the worldwide networks of terrorist payments (as Washington dropped its earlier objections to tightening international money-laundering restrictions that it had viewed as setting up unwelcome tax-collection agencies). And to show that other policies would not be held hostage by the fight against terrorism, European governments joined with the United States and other partners to ensure a relaunch of the Doha trade round.

In intra-European reactions, in order to facilitate its own defense in the borderless criminal space terrorists and organized mafias had already created, the European Union adopted an EU-wide arrest warrant. In addition, with reluctance, it dropped its civil-rights compunctions about creating an EU-wide police force and upgraded the old, loose TREVI cooperation of law enforcement agencies into a fledgling Europol.³⁰

European coordination in foreign policy was less impressive—and this disarray also served Washington's purposes in giving the United States greater bilateral leverage with each EU member individually. German chancellor Gerhard Schröder's call for a European Union summit right after 9/11 to forge a common approach was rejected by his fellow heads of

government. Tony Blair hugged Bush as close as he could in continuing the old Anglo-Saxon special relationship. The Spanish and Italian prime ministers, José María Aznar and Silvio Berlusconi, followed Blair's example as junior partners. President Jacques Chirac chose instead the traditional French approach of being a "foul-weather friend" in demurring from U.S. decisions, while still standing ready to commit troops to American expeditions in the end, perhaps after gaining some modification of the superpower's plans. The European maneuvering sometimes grew farcical, as when Blair planned an intimate strategy dinner with Chirac and Schröder, but the Italian, Spanish, Dutch, and Belgian prime ministers all got wind of it and crashed the party at 10 Downing Street—and the eight remaining wallflowers complained anew that they were being subjected to a directorate of the big players. It was all well and good for pundits to interpret the very different reactions of Blair and Chirac as two different methods aimed at the same goal of restraining the United States from more extreme action—but this was small comfort for those watching the discord among leaders who had repeatedly pledged themselves to a common foreign policy.³¹

Public Opinion

Immediately after the September 11 attacks, sympathy for the Americans doubled Bush's (abysmally low) approval ratings in Europe and overturned the pre-9/11 view of the United States as obstructionist in world treaties. As the American military campaign opened in Afghanistan, 64 percent of French, 61 percent of Germans, 73 percent of Britons, and 83 percent of Americans approved the action.³² Favorable opinion of Bush's foreign policy shot up in France from 16 percent in August 2001 to 32 percent in April 2002, in Germany from 23 to 35 percent, and in the United Kingdom from 17 to 40 percent (as compared with a rise in American popular approval from 45 to 69 percent). Reflecting the wave of affection for Americans, *Le Monde* famously declared, "Nous sommes tous Américains."³³ Two hundred thousand Berliners gathered spontaneously at the Brandenburg Gate to show their sympathy with America. Chancellor Gerhard Schröder pledged "unlimited solidarity" with the United States and eulogized New York as the whole world's "symbol for millions of emigrants fleeing persecution of life and limb. The symbol of a refuge, the

chance to survive and make a new beginning, a promise of hope for the persecuted and the oppressed. The incredible and wonderful world-wide solidarity has a lot to do with this phenomenon.”³⁴ The German embassy in Washington established a charity to aid 9/11 victims and survivors, expecting to attract some tens of thousands of dollars—and was immediately inundated with \$42 million in donations. And Tony Blair continued to circumnavigate the globe as an avenging angel, to the ovation of Americans and the embarrassment of Englishmen.

As both opinion surveys and government statements attested, the Europeans were greatly relieved by Bush’s initial rejection of what they feared could be a profoundly destabilizing Iraq invasion, especially given the lack of evidence linking secular Baghdad with Islamist al Qaeda terrorists—and by the president’s meeting with Islamic leaders in the United States to assure them that Washington did not equate the war on terrorism with a war on Islam and a clash of civilizations. They admired America’s spectacular success in forcing on the Pakistani government the hard choice of being either for or against the United States by disavowing the extremist Islamist fanatics on its soil to deprive them of a safe haven. They admired American success at weaning key Pashtun warlords away from supporting Mullah Omar to supporting Mullah Bush, as some of the Afghans phrased it; in anointing the solid Hamid Karzai as interim Afghan leader; and in deflecting an Indian-Pakistani nuclear clash over Kashmir in the midst of all the other turbulence. They appreciated as well Bush’s acceptance of Russian president Vladimir Putin’s instant pro-western shift as the American president assembled an international coalition that initially resembled the coalition his father had built for the Gulf War. They approved the softening of the Bush hardliners’ presumption that China would be the inevitable adversary; and they certainly applauded Bush’s increase in previously neglected development aid in the \$5 billion Millennium Challenge Account. Both sides of the Atlantic, it seemed, were agreed that the most important task was to drain the swamps that bred terrorists.

They were clearly disappointed when Washington spurned NATO’s offer of help beyond commissioning a European task force to monitor the waters off the Horn of Africa, letting a few alliance AWACS surveillance planes patrol North America to free U.S. counterparts for missions in

Southeast Asia, and accepting some European special forces and marines for Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan. But in the first few months after 9/11, misgivings were secondary. The general European assessment was that Bush's response was measured—and that the administration now felt a need for partners and was returning from the flamboyant unilateralism of its first eight months to a more traditional post–World War II multilateralism.

Most striking in this transatlantic solidarity, perhaps, was the role that Chancellor Schröder, a child of the “1968” anti–Vietnam War left, played in sending German special forces to fight alongside American troops in Afghanistan. Defying all the semipacifist traditions of his party and his Green Party coalition partners, he staked his chancellery post on a vote of nonconfidence on the issue, and he won. For the first time since 1945, German troops were sent into combat outside Europe.

The American Narrative

In retrospect, however, the Europeans should probably not have been as surprised as they were by the direction the Bush administration ultimately took. Not only had the American and European self-images been diverging for some time and, after 9/11, offering authentic superpatriotic veins on the western side of the Atlantic for the neoconservatives to tap. Even more conspicuously, the neoconservatives had never hidden the radical agenda they began pressing in earnest after 9/11. The dispute still rages, of course, over just how much of U.S.-European tension should be attributed to unconsonant long-term trends on the two sides of the ocean (and by extrapolation to preexistent “anti-Americanism”) and how much derives from Bush policies alone (and therefore represents, from the U.S. point of view, an “anti-Bushism” that is less structural and less dangerous).

Certainly in the perceived American narrative—and never more so than after 9/11—the identity of the United States is that of the city set on a hill. America is uniquely righteous, and uniquely justified in its policies, because it has the best democracy in the world, and, along with it, the best absorption of foreign immigrants. Europeans, by contrast, are widely dismissed by American elites (if less so by the man on the street, the workhorse Chicago Council on Foreign Relations surveys suggest)³⁵ as rigid, weak, spoiled, pusillanimous, and free riders on America's provision

of the public good of global security. And especially with the fusion of the American religious right and Jewish neoconservatives in backing Israel's hard-line suppression of the second *intifada* and of Palestinians who might be harboring terrorists, American commentators have regularly accused the Europeans of veiled or not-so-veiled anti-Semitism in their criticism of the Israeli approach.

Since the U.S. system is the world's best, if the American government selected by that system decides on certain policies, then these must logically also be the best policies for the world, whether they involve the taken-for-granted extraterritoriality of the Sarbanes-Oxley bill on mandatory accounting practices in business, the effort to go beyond mere U.S. abstention from the International Criminal Court to pressure other countries to reject it, or the refusal to pay U.S. dues to UN programs in which any information is disseminated about abortion.³⁶

Moreover, the United States has recently been uniquely successful economically. Its productivity increase soars above Europe's.³⁷ The United States was the motor for the extraordinary boom of the 1990s, and even after the bubble burst, the United States continued to lead the world as the consumer of last resort. When U.S. stock exchanges plunge, European bourses plunge as well; when Wall Street rallies, so do Frankfurt, London, and Amsterdam. Today no one would dream of repeating President Jimmy Carter's plea of the 1970s by demanding that deflationary Japan or anemic Europe become the new locomotive of the world economy.

Finally, Americans know that they are uniquely powerful. Their smart munitions and real-time battlefield intelligence and management have raced so far ahead in the revolution in military affairs that few allies are well enough equipped technologically to fight alongside them. Their annual dollar outlay for defense is double that of all European Union members taken together. Yet the September 11, 2001, felling of the World Trade Towers, followed by the still-unsolved anthrax attacks, shattered Americans' illusion of invulnerability and left the superpower with the volatile mixed feelings of omnipotence and vulnerability that Pierre Hassner has dissected³⁸—and with the perception of more threats from international terrorism and potential Iraqi development of nuclear weapons than the Europeans saw.³⁹ Europeans, having contained their own cults of domestic terrorism in the 1970s and 1980s, might think that

U.S. alarm is exaggerated, but Americans, targeted by global terrorists and swept up in their righteous war on evil and their swift victory in Iraq, feel that Europeans still hide behind the United States and willfully underestimate the dangers of fanatics' acquisition of weapons of mass destruction (WMD).

One more element in America's sense of power derives from Washington's military and economic clout but goes well beyond it. That is the U.S. capacity to set the global agenda. If the Bush administration decides it will deploy a missile-defense system, then after a few months, opposition to this program evaporates around the world. If the United States decides to torpedo the International Criminal Court, the Europeans eventually stop wasting their political capital on opposing exemptions for U.S. personnel. If the United States, for whatever reason, takes its case for invading Iraq to the United Nations, the whole burden of proof rests not on establishing compelling arguments in favor of an extraordinary resort to war, but rather on the need for allies to demonstrate their loyalty to the United States and to its chosen course.

The European Narrative

The European self-image is strikingly different from the American one, as Kagan, Cooper, and Weiler all stress. After centuries of armed conflict, the Europeans see themselves as having finally attained the miracle of peace in their once war-prone heartland—not least through the benign intervention of the United States in World Wars I and II and the Marshall Plan, of course.⁴⁰ They were shocked and chastened by the forty-five million dead in World War II, most of them in Europe. And between 1945 and the mid-1990s they responded with a chain reaction of reconciliations so fundamental that today younger Germans and French simply cannot comprehend how their grandparents ever considered each other arch-enemies; Dutch who originally protested Princess Beatrix's marriage to a German mourned the death of their beloved Prince Claus in 2002; Poles flock to seek jobs and education in the Berlin most of their parents despised and feared; and younger Ukrainians, despite Polish-Ukrainian butchery that continued even after World War II, see rapidly modernizing Poland as an attractive model and their lifeline to the West.

Even the "German question" that had dogged Europe for the century and a half before 1945—the conundrum of how to integrate the populous,

energetic Germans in peace with their neighbors—turned out to have been solved quietly in the second half of the twentieth century. By the end of the cold war no country was more keen than Germany on reconciliation and the progressive subordination of national to European identity. Yet long after unified Germany's main problem became weakness rather than strength in the late 1990s, the reflex of many British and American commentators to events in Berlin would still be to ask if Germany was once more becoming too "assertive."⁴¹ For insight into the shift in German mentality, credit must go to Swiss journalist Fritz René Allemann for being the first to trust the historical change and to write boldly *Bonn Ist Nicht Weimar* (Bonn Is Not Weimar) as early as 1956.⁴² No prominent German historian believed the evidence of transformation sufficiently to attempt a comprehensive reinterpretation of pre-Hitler history as laying the groundwork for eventual rejection by Germany of its prolonged anti-western *sonderweg* [exceptionalism] and metamorphosis into a "normal" country until Heinrich August Winkler published *Der lange Weg nach Westen* (The Long Road to the West) in 2000.⁴³ Even then numerous German critics faulted their compatriot for his rush to positive judgment. The magisterial five-volume history of the Federal Republic of (West) Germany that was published shortly before German unification still would not venture such a benign evaluation.⁴⁴ It ended instead with the essay "Die deutsche Frage: Das offene Dilemma" ("The German Question: The Open Dilemma"). Timothy Garton Ash's thoughtful *In Europe's Name*, published in 1993, hedged its bets somewhat in making the case that the Federal Republic consistently pursued its own interests, all the while invoking "Europe's name."⁴⁵ Yet the obverse of this had to be that all along Bonn's self-definition of enlightened German interests was remarkably pro-European.⁴⁶

The first real test of European Community robustness came with the end of the cold war. Until then its institutions, however odd, had worked well enough. A consensus system in an entity that was far more than a confederation but far less than a federation should have been a recipe for scapegoating, torpor, lowest-common-denominator gridlock, and blackmail by the most ornery members of the club, à la Malta in the 1970s negotiations at the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe. In that forum Valletta repeatedly waited until all three dozen other partici-

pants had laboriously worked out a general compromise, then refused to sign off on the agreement until it won some unrelated parochial concession. In the EC/EU, to be sure, almost every member government succumbed on occasion (usually during elections) to blaming “Brussels” for domestic troubles. And every member government constantly chafes under the policy straitjacket it is forced into by having well over half its domestic legislation prescribed by the EU.

Nonetheless, the system of shaming recalcitrants into consensus, if necessary, has functioned passably well. The EC/EU has always muddled through. The European Commission acts authoritatively in negotiating on behalf of all EU members on trade issues and enforcing antitrust regulations. Cooperation turns out not to have been just an emergency reaction to the Soviet threat, nor even a construct that still depends on the offshore balancing of the Germans by the United States. After the cold-war threat vanished, a quickened European Community still took major steps toward fulfilling its original goal of a real single market, by 1992. The following year it renamed itself the European Union (in an appellation that reflected noble intent rather more than reality). Thereafter, in a historically unprecedented move, twelve EU members even ceded one of the most precious attributes of sovereignty in abandoning their national currencies to a common euro—and in the process invented best-practice benchmarking as the way to escape the lowest common denominator. Most impressive of all in this exercise, perhaps, was the real economic convergence that occurred among major national economies, especially in low inflation.

No less astounding has been the success of the EC/EU in the help it rendered the new democracies, market economies, and civil societies to the east in their impossibly accelerated decade-long race through the political, economic, and social revolutions the west Europeans took more than a century to master. Unlike the agonizing death of the Ottoman Empire a century earlier—a bloody precedent that fueled fears about what the end of Russian empire might bring—the Soviet implosion was remarkably peaceful. Only in Romania in the external empire was there a spasm of violence. Only in Chechnya in the internal empire was there sustained violence. In Europe proper the atrocities in former Yugoslavia in the early 1990s were eventually halted (with the reluctant aid of the United States,

of course, and after five years of paralysis by both Europe and the United States), and for the first time in their history the Balkans too came to be included in the penumbra of western Europe's haven of peace and prosperity. The entry into the EU club of ten new central European countries in an arc from Poland to Slovenia in 2004 will mark these lands' "return" (occasionally real, more often concocted, in a normative rewriting of history) to the West.

All told, the EU role in the transition has been a significant exercise in crisis management and even—as Germans like to point out to American critics—of regime change on a huge scale, executed peacefully. Ironically, precisely because it has been so successful, it has drawn little attention. It radiates no aura to help shield the European experiment in new forms of governance from two existential challenges that now confront it simultaneously. The first is the adjustment of EU institutions and procedures as the club welcomes central Europeans who have barely been socialized into pluralist and democratic give-and-take, let alone into the delicate EU consensus system. The second is potential hostility to the European project from the very U.S. patron that originally forced the resistant Europeans to cooperate as a prerequisite for receiving Marshall Plan aid.

The Neoconservative Narrative

In early 2003 the final position of American neoconservatives on Europe was not completely clear. But there were warning signals.

Neoconservatives, as Americans know and Europeans have been learning, are policy activists who typically started as Democrats but turned into Republicans in the 1970s or, specifically, into Reagan Republicans in the 1980s, because they advocated a harder line on the Soviet Union and arms control than the Democrats did. Many were equally hard-line on Israeli-Palestinian issues. Many would move into key policymaking positions in the administration of George W. Bush. Richard Perle, who as an aide to Democratic senator Henry Jackson had masterminded passage of the Jackson-Vanik amendment limiting American cooperation with the Soviet Union as long as Soviet Jews were not allowed free emigration, became chairman (later, ordinary member) of the influential Defense Policy Board. Lewis Libby became chief of staff to Vice President Dick Cheney. Douglas Feith became under secretary of

defense for policy, John Bolton under secretary of state for arms control and international security.

The neoconservatives in the new Bush administration, who were primarily interested in foreign policy, formed a highly compatible marriage with the domestic Republican right to build an intellectual worldview that was far more coherent than in most U.S. administrations. The party right saw in the Republican capture of both the White House and Congress the chance of a century, an opportunity to roll back the whole governmental and political legacy of Franklin Delano Roosevelt's New Deal and Lyndon B. Johnson's Great Society. Some components of the desired reversal, such as tax cuts for the rich to promote investment and deregulation, reflected long-time Republican orthodoxy. Others, such as abandonment of the balanced budget that Republicans had long championed and Democratic president Clinton had finally achieved—and a return plunge into large deficits to finance the huge new appropriations for the military and home defense—were highly unorthodox. To critics and fans alike they seemed to be designed to create a future financial crisis that could be solved only by cutting social entitlements.⁴⁷ Not quite as unorthodox, for a party whose *bête noir* had long been big government but whose pet domestic issue was strict law and order, was the expansion of intrusive government powers of investigation and police control in the war on terrorism.

Such domestic issues held no intrinsic interest for Europeans, but they were important insofar as they bolstered the neoconservative foreign policy.

By all accounts, the opening salvos of the American neoconservatives' campaign to revise America's foreign policy began with Charles Krauthammer's article "The Unipolar Moment" in *Foreign Affairs* in 1990 and Wolfowitz's draft Defense Policy Guidance in 1992.⁴⁸ Krauthammer christened the postwar era "unipolar," in a phrase that stuck. Wolfowitz, then under secretary of defense for planning, planted the seeds of pre-emption that would eventually blossom into the National Security Strategy of September 2002 and the Iraq war of 2003. Wolfowitz had in any case opposed the decision of President George H. W. Bush to end the Gulf War in 1991 after ousting the Iraqi army from Kuwait without marching on to Baghdad to depose Saddam Hussein. The policy guidance draft that he supervised (and that was written by a team that included

Lewis Libby) revisited this issue in envisaging U.S. military intervention in general “as a constant fixture” and in Iraq in particular whenever it might be needed to ensure “access to vital raw material, primarily Persian Gulf oil.” The underlying global philosophy was that the United States must ensure its own military dominance in the world by “detering potential competitors from even aspiring to a larger regional or global role.” China seemed to be the main suspect, but a few European readers of the draft could not help but wonder if they appeared somewhere on the list too. Preemptive attacks and ad hoc coalitions were among the favored means to preserve American supremacy.⁴⁹

When the contents of the Wolfowitz memorandum were leaked to the *New York Times*, there was an outcry among more conventional Washington political actors that led to its rejection and adoption of a much more cautious final Pentagon document.

The next neoconservative foreign-policy declarations of note came in 1996, in the United States and also in Israel. Kagan and *Weekly Standard* editor William Kristol called in *Foreign Affairs* for a “neo-Reaganite foreign policy” that would apply America’s military might “unabashedly” to advance political liberalization in a “benevolent hegemony.”⁵⁰ Perle, Feith, and David Wurmser (who would become a senior adviser to John Bolton at the State Department) wrote a report to the newly elected Likud government urging it to make “a clean break” with peace negotiations with the Palestinians and with the whole notion of exchanging land for peace. They advocated instead “reestablishing the principle of preemption”—and hoped that Israel might even “roll back” Syria, promote the ouster of Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein, and thus “affect the strategic balance in the Middle East profoundly.”⁵¹

A year later the neoconservatives founded the Project for the New American Century under the chairmanship of Kristol; cofounder Kagan was on the board. In January 1998, Wolfowitz, Perle, Bolton, and Rumsfeld joined twelve other prominent conservatives who would staff the top ranks of the future Bush administration in signing an open letter condemning the containment of Iraq as a failure and urging President Clinton to “aim at the removal of Saddam Hussein’s regime from power.”

Two years thereafter, the project’s “Rebuilding America’s Defenses” noted the problems raised by stationing of American soldiers in Saudi

Arabia and hinted at Iraq as a better venue in recommending a permanent U.S. military presence in the Gulf even “should Saddam pass from the scene.”⁵²

Europe figured very little in the various statements. NATO was mentioned in a cursory, but not unfriendly fashion. The ad hoc coalitions that were to aid the United States in the Middle East could well have been understood in the contemporary context as appropriate for that region without carrying any implications for the permanent European alliance.

Immediately after the 9/11 attacks—within days of Wolfowitz’s rebuff at Camp David—thirty-seven leading associates of the Project for the New American Century wrote an open letter again advocating military intervention in Iraq, observing, “Even if evidence does not link Iraq directly to the attack, any strategy aiming at the eradication of terrorism and its sponsors must include a determined effort to remove Saddam Hussein from power.”⁵³

A clash between neoconservatives and Europeans was by no means predestined. But it was an incident that was waiting to happen.