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# 1

## *Introduction*

At first glance, little is new in the notion that developments beyond the continent of Europe often constitute a source of tension between the United States and the countries of western Europe. Throughout the four decades of the cold war, NATO and transatlantic relationships were more often rocked by developments far afield—the Korean War, Indochina, the Suez crisis, Lebanon, the Cuban missile crisis, Vietnam, the 1973 Middle East war and oil crisis, Lebanon, and then Libya in the 1980s—than they were by what took place inside Europe or, more narrowly, within the treaty area of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.<sup>1</sup>

This pattern can be readily explained. The Soviet challenge was more immediate in Europe and provided needed glue to the alliance. But it did not guarantee harmony in Europe, much less beyond. Little sympathy arose in the United States, especially in the initial years following World War II, for what turned out to be the final vestiges of European colonialism—and Europe had little interest in what was seen as American moralizing and meddling in Europe's affairs. As the years passed, U.S. prosecution of cold war competition around the world often met with European apathy or opposition—reactions that were the source of more than a little American frustration, anger, or both. The net result

was mostly the same: the United States and its European allies often worked at cross purposes. This tendency to disagree on what to do in other parts of the globe inevitably affected allied ability to cooperate inside of Europe, in spite of the mostly common front against the Soviet Union.<sup>2</sup>

The first major challenge of the post-cold war era came from outside of Europe—the August 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait—and, for the most part, the transatlantic relationship displayed a high degree of unity and utility. Two European states, Great Britain and France, proved to be among the most valuable political and military allies of the United States during the 1990–91 Persian Gulf conflict. Despite differences—Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher was impatient holding off military action while new UN Security Council resolutions were sought; French President François Mitterrand was more anxious than President George Bush to avoid a land war and more willing to distance himself from Kuwait's ruling family if that was the price of persuading Saddam Hussein to accept UN demands—the overall pattern was one of collaboration among the three Western members of the UN Security Council.

The breakup of Yugoslavia presented a different kind of challenge—more a source (and a reflection) of transatlantic friction than a successful experience. In Europe but “out-of-area” from NATO's perspective, Bosnia was a venue where for years the United States and Europe were unable to concert either their diplomacy or the use of military force. (The American inclination to avoid entanglement and hand responsibility for Bosnia to a Europe that proved unable and unwilling to take it on only made matters worse.) Not until the situation grew dire—for both the local inhabitants and the Western alliance—did matters begin to improve, as NATO air attacks, led by the United States, on Bosnian Serb positions helped to bring about new realities that made the Dayton Accords possible.<sup>3</sup> In 1998, a similar pattern unfolded in Kosovo. In this case, both Americans and Europeans were slow to react to the large-scale repression and aggression, directed primarily against the mostly Albanian inhabitants of Kosovo. Here, again, the United States and Europe often found themselves at odds over the proper ends and means of policy, most notably the use of military force.<sup>4</sup>

The 1990–91 Gulf War collaboration and the eventual cooperation in Bosnia should not obscure a larger reality. Increased friction (and decreased cooperation) characterizes relations across the Atlantic on

policies toward problem countries. This trend has, if anything, accelerated with the passage of time, and with it the gradual passing from the scene of a generation informed by the habit of transatlantic cooperation. This development worked to reinforce trends already accelerated by the demise of the cold war, the disappearance of the Soviet threat, and the reduction of tension in Europe, all of which reduced the obvious necessity and momentum for transatlantic cooperation, especially in the security sphere.<sup>5</sup>

Yet the reduced threat to European security does not mean the absence of stakes. To the contrary, how the United States and the countries of Europe work with one another beyond Europe matters in at least three important ways. First, a good deal hangs in the balance. Four of the five countries examined in this volume are major energy exporters. Three pose major challenges to global efforts aiming to stem the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. All five offer substantial markets for European and U.S. exports. Second, the United States and Europe are potential partners in shaping the post-cold war world. Their ability to cooperate will have a major impact on whether the emerging era of international relations turns out to be one that is more or less violent, prosperous, and democratic. Economic and political sanctions (as well as various supplier or export control arrangements designed to thwart proliferation of weapons of mass destruction) will inevitably have less impact in the absence of transatlantic cooperation; so, too, will diplomacy premised on the notion of providing rewards or incentives only if certain behavioral standards are reached. Military action becomes far more expensive (in human and financial terms) and more difficult to sustain domestically if burdens are not shared. Third, disagreements on particular out-of-area issues will inevitably affect the ability of Americans and Europeans to cooperate on other issues, regardless of their venue. Thus, differences over the best approach to one conflict can frustrate cooperation in another if patterns of unilateralism prevail. This concern is anything but hypothetical. At one point, the United States considered abandoning the Bosnian arms embargo. Whatever the merits of a policy change for Bosnia, such a decision could well have led France and others to reconsider their support of Iraqi sanctions. Similarly, secondary sanctions—the introduction of sanctions against third parties who do not participate in primary sanctions against a designated target—by nature expand the area of disagreement. Indeed, several of

the cases in this volume look at secondary sanctions and their impact on such common interests as strengthening the capacity of the World Trade Organization to regulate international trade.

This book examines five prominent non-European challenges to U.S.-European relations after the cold war: Cuba, Iran, Iraq, Libya, and Nigeria. These countries do not constitute the complete universe of such problems, but they are some of the most important and representative.<sup>6</sup> How the two poles of the transatlantic relationship manage these issues will directly influence the evolution of these five important countries as well as the ability of the United States and Europe to act together in the post-cold war world.

Cuba is the problem country of longest standing. It has been a subject of transatlantic policy debates for nearly four decades. A basic discrepancy exists on the seriousness of the situation. For most European governments, Cuba constitutes a normal country, whereas for the United States, it is anything but normal given its location, history, and role in domestic American politics. Not surprisingly, this perceptual gap has led to fundamental policy differences—differences that would have remained readily manageable except for the American decision to introduce secondary sanctions, as part of the Cuban Liberty and Democratic (LIBERTAD) Act of 1996, or Helms-Burton Act, against those European individuals and firms doing business with expropriated property.<sup>7</sup>

Iran has been a problem for U.S.-European relations for only about half the time that Cuba has. Like Cuba, differences exist over how much of a threat it poses and, even more pointedly, over how best to deal with Iran. Europeans have favored engagement. Until recently, the U.S. bias was for sanctions. (The gap between these two orientations was reflected in how the policies were labeled: “critical dialogue” as opposed to “dual containment.”) Also, like Cuba, transatlantic policy differences have been exacerbated by the American threat to impose secondary sanctions (using the Iran and Libya Sanctions Act of 1996, or ILSA) against those non-American firms investing in Iran’s energy sector.

Iraq constitutes a fundamentally different problem from both of the above two countries in important ways. As alluded to earlier, the United States and the governments of Europe have not disagreed fundamentally over how to deal with Iraq ever since Saddam Hussein attacked Kuwait more than eight years ago. Time, however, has taken its toll, and the strain between the United States and France in particular is

increasing, in large part over the desirability and necessity of maintaining comprehensive sanctions and over how best to bring about Iraqi compliance with its international obligations.

Libya in some ways resembles both the Iraq and Iran cases. Libyan terrorism provided inspiration for considerable common policy; explicit UN Security Council backing further facilitated transatlantic cooperation. But as is true with Iraq, transatlantic cooperation has weakened somewhat with the passage of time. As is also true with Iran, some European governments argue that the current policy—political and economic isolation of Libya—risks bringing about worse political leadership in that country. Also, like Iran, Europeans strongly reject secondary American sanctions instituted to discourage investment in Libya's energy sector.

Nigeria is a special case. It has been less an actual source of disagreement between Americans and Europeans than a potential one. Still, the deaths of General Sani Abacha and his democratic opponent Moshood Abiola have not eliminated the policy questions or differences, and Americans and Europeans need to determine how best to promote a democratic transition in one of Africa's most important countries. As a result, Nigeria brings to the surface basic questions common to all five of these cases and to those that might emerge in the future. Should Western policy emphasize commerce or the internal politics of a country? How, if at all, should economic sanctions be employed?

The book's conclusion sets forth ideas for bridging Atlantic differences in each of these settings, both to increase the possible impact of American and European diplomacy and to limit the potential of these issues to poison the overall transatlantic relationship. The conclusion also suggests some more general steps for Americans and Europeans to consider, again with the goal of making the post-cold war world a more stable and prosperous place. With great power relations within Europe mostly stable, these issues are likely to have the greatest import for—and impact on—transatlantic relations in the years to come.

### Notes

1. For background on the traditional out-of-area issue, see Peter N. Schmitz, *Defending the NATO Alliance: Global Implications* (Washington, D.C.: National

Defense University Press, 1987); Elizabeth D. Sherwood, *Allies in Crisis: Meeting Global Challenges to Western Security* (Yale University Press, 1990); and Douglas Stuart and William Tow, *The Limits of Alliance: NATO Out-of-Area Problems Since 1949* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990).

2. Suez and Hungary are two examples; another is the pervasive impact of differences over the October 1973 war in the Middle East. For analyses of difficulties in the alliance, see, for example, Robert Endicott Osgood, *NATO: The Entangling Alliance* (University of Chicago Press, 1962); Henry A. Kissinger, *The Troubled Partnership: A Re-Appraisal of the Atlantic Alliance* (McGraw-Hill, 1965); Anton W. DePorte, *Europe between the Superpowers: The Enduring Balance* (Yale University Press, 1986); and Josef Joffe, *The Limited Partnership: Europe, the United States, and the Burdens of Alliance* (Ballinger, 1987).

3. For analyses of U.S., European, and NATO involvement in Bosnia, see the chapter entitled "America, Europe, and Bosnia" in Richard Holbrooke, *To End a War* (Random House, 1998); Ivo H. Daalder, *Getting to Dayton: The Making of America's Bosnia Policy* (Brookings, 1999); and Carl Bildt, "Europe and Bosnia: Lessons of the Past and Paths for the Future," address to the Netherlands Association of International Affairs, The Hague, May 27, 1997.

4. See, for example, William Drozdiak, "U.S. European Allies Divided over NATO's Authority to Act," *Washington Post*, November 8, 1998, p. A33; and Roger Cohen, "Kosovo Crisis Strains Relations between the U.S. and Europe," *New York Times*, November 10, 1998, p. A13.

5. See Stephen M. Walt, "The Ties That Fray: Why Europe and America Are Drifting Apart," *National Interest*, no. 54 (Winter 1998-99), pp. 3-11.

6. The former Yugoslavia was not included given its location in Europe; for this same reason, Cyprus is omitted. Both are technically but not politically "out-of-area." India and Pakistan (in the wake of their nuclear tests) would have made good cases but were left out because the project was too far along to accord them equal treatment. North Korea was excluded as it has largely been a subject of concern mostly for the United States, the Republic of Korea, and Japan. Russia and China were excluded for a different reason, namely, that their importance already accords them a special place in transatlantic relations.

7. To date, the United States has not actually applied these secondary sanctions, having agreed to waive portions of Helms-Burton in an agreement signed May 18, 1998. See "Understanding with Respect to Disciplines for the Strengthening of Investment Protection," London, May 18, 1998, as found on the Internet (<http://www.eurunion.org/news/invest.htm>). Also, see James Bennet, "To Clear Air with Europe, U.S. Waives Some Sanctions," *New York Times*, May 19, 1998, p. A6.