

WHAT FUTURE FOR THE ATLANTIC ALLIANCE?

by

WALLACE J. THIES

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A curious relationship has developed between the United States and its European allies in the 37 years since the North Atlantic Treaty was signed in Washington on 4 April 1949. For all of the members of the Atlantic Alliance, the years since 1949 have been a period of unparalleled prosperity and economic growth. The members of the alliance have achieved a degree of military coordination and integration of separate national armed forces unprecedented in the history of alliances. No member has been coerced into leaving nor have any chosen to leave voluntarily, while four states have joined the original 12 as full members.¹ Most important, Europe has been at peace for four full decades, a period roughly twice the interval between the First and Second World Wars.

Political leaders on both sides of the Atlantic have been quick to claim for the alliance much of the credit for the peace and prosperity that Europe has enjoyed these past four decades. They have also been quick to complain about the alliance's shortcomings, most of which they blame on their counterparts on the other side of the ocean. These complaints have not gone unnoticed among observers of NATO's affairs. Americans and Europeans, journalists and academics, military officers and civilian officials have all been quick to pronounce the alliance "in crisis," or at the least in disarray. Looking back over its history there seems to have been scarcely a year when NATO was not widely said to be in crisis, or even on the brink of disintegration.²

In retrospect, it should come as no surprise that assessments of the state of the alliance have taken this form. The North Atlantic Treaty was not a blueprint that specified to the smallest detail how the alliance was to be organized and run. It represented instead a commitment on the part of the signatories to make common cause and to strive to work out solutions to the problems that were expected to arise in the course of implementing the treaty in a spirit of goodwill and with a concern for the needs of the whole.

A recurrent theme in the negotiations that preceded the signing of the North Atlantic Treaty was the hope that the alliance would evolve into something more than a "mere military alliance," which was a concept that had fallen into disfavor in the liberal democratic states as a result of the revulsion over the two world wars that had been the product of the struggle for power and empire in Europe.³ But for NATO to evolve into a community of states linked by more than simply fear of Soviet power would require a willingness on the part of its members to accept new responsibilities and obligations toward their partners. These were relatively easy to accept in principle but considerably harder to implement in practice.

To the European members, exhausted by two devastating wars in the span of a generation, the alliance offered an opportunity to shift a portion of the burden of providing for their security to the United States, which they continually urged to provide leadership, aid, and soldiers to the

cause of Europe's defense. But to American officials, the purpose of the alliance was to create a sense of security in Europe, which was expected to contribute to the restoration of the economic health and military potential of the European members. This would make possible a restoration of the European balance of power, which in turn would permit the withdrawal of most or all of the American military forces stationed in Europe, thus lessening the burdens on the United States.⁴

One result of these competing purposes was to introduce three permanent sources of tension and strain within NATO. One arose from the conflict pitting those who wished to press ahead toward greater community against those who gave primacy to defending the national interest. A second resulted from disagreements between those who felt that the alliance's principal military goal should be to deter a Soviet attack on Western Europe and those who wished to put in place the armed forces necessary to defend against such an attack. Still a third stemmed from the desire felt by all members to ensure that the other members made the maximum feasible contribution in support of the collective goals while deflecting the efforts of their partners to scrutinize and criticize their own contributions.

Untangling the disputes that resulted from these divergent perspectives often required arduous investigative research, since the cleavages within the alliance as a whole were mirrored by divisions within governments, parliaments, and sometimes even within a single ministry. There thus grew up a veritable cottage industry of academics and journalists seeking to explain the often tangled and sometimes arcane roots of the alliance's many crises, the reasons why they were important, and their implications for the future. The alliance's very successes added urgency to this effort, lest years of progress in consolidating the Western community of states be jeopardized by a dispute that was allowed to fester.

This fascination with the alliance's many crises was not without its drawbacks. Alliance crises occurred so frequently and then faded from view so quickly that the

language used to describe them came to be inflated by observers who sought to convince their audiences that the situation really was serious. Instead of mere crises, disputes within NATO became "profound crises," "deep crises," "general crises," and so on. Terms such as these, however, were useful more for conveying alarm than for making precise and accurate judgments about the condition of the alliance. Discussions of NATO's troubled state typically began with the assertion that the alliance was once again "in crisis," followed by a review of causes, consequences, and possible solutions.⁵ In effect, the existence of an alliance crisis was taken for granted, and no one defined the term "alliance crisis" in a way that would permit a disinterested observer to determine when the alliance is in crisis and when it is not.

The problems resulting from such a casual approach have become especially apparent of late. The last five years have witnessed a new sense of urgency in assessments of the state of the alliance. Increasingly, the theme has appeared in reporting and commentary on the alliance that this time things are different, that relations between the United States and its European allies are worse than ever before, and that the latest alliance crisis is the worst ever.⁶ The very frequency with which NATO has been proclaimed to be embroiled in a potentially fatal crisis, however, should occasion skepticism about these claims.

Dr. Wallace J. Thies is a member of the Department of Politics at the Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C. During 1979 and 1980, he worked in the Bureau of Politico-Military Affairs in the State Department as an International Affairs Fellow of the Council on Foreign Relations. He is a graduate of Marquette University and holds an M.A. in international relations and M.Phil. and Ph.D. degrees in political science from Yale University. He is the author of *The Atlantic Alliance, Nuclear Weapons, and European Attitudes: Re-examining the Conventional Wisdom* (1983) and *When Governments Collide: Coercion and Diplomacy in the Vietnam Conflict* (1980).



It is instructive to trace the evolution of such recent claims.⁷ In just the last five years, disputes within the alliance over issues as diverse as the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, defense spending and burden-sharing, the deployment of new nuclear missiles in Europe, the Siberian natural gas pipeline, and export subsidies and import restrictions have all been cited as the cause of the worst strains in the history of the alliance. In the past, it seemed as if the alliance confronted a new crisis almost annually. Now it seems as if almost every year the alliance confronts its greatest crisis ever. Are the crises of the last five years so much more severe than earlier disputes that we are justified in concluding that the condition of the alliance is worse now than ever before? Does the combination of several sharp disputes in a relatively short period of time justify the conclusion that the alliance has been caught in its greatest crisis ever? Or is it the case that observers of the alliance's affairs have routinely exaggerated the challenges that it faces?

A separate but closely related issue has to do with the evidence on which claims about the state of the alliance are based. Almost from the time the alliance was founded, observers have been discovering ominous trends, problems that are growing increasingly acute, and contradictions that are said to sharpen with each passing year. These claims are almost never accompanied by the kind of evidence that would permit a disinterested observer to verify whether the hypothesized changes really are occurring in the predicted direction. Instead, judgments about the state of the alliance often have been based on evidence that is largely impressionistic. Journalists accord considerable weight to the complaints of anonymous officials from defense and foreign ministries. Observers from the academic world take note of these complaints and write books and articles that seek to analyze the underlying causes and prescribe needed changes. The sheer volume of material published on the alliance's ills itself becomes an index of the seriousness of its troubles. The potential for self-fulfilling prophecies is very great.

Problems of definition and evidence are so fundamental that an appropriate starting point for an evaluation of recent claims concerning the condition of the alliance is with a reconsideration of the sources of tension and strain within it. Is there any evidence that suggests that the strains within the alliance have become noticeably greater during the past five years than they were during the alliance's first three decades?

1947 ALL OVER AGAIN

The claim that the alliance had become embroiled in a crisis greater than ever before first appeared in the late spring of 1980, coinciding with a special meeting of defense and foreign ministers in Brussels to consider the alliance's response to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.⁸ The meeting was intended to demonstrate unity of purpose and action by ratifying a package of proposals put forward by the United States, but it had the unintended effect of revealing a sharp divergence of views between the United States and its European allies.

By the time of the ministerial gathering in Brussels, Jimmy Carter's presidency had been severely tested by the seizure of the American Embassy in Iran, the attack on the Great Mosque in Mecca, and the attacks on the American Embassies in Pakistan and Libya, all of which occurred within a five-week span in November and December 1979. These events had a traumatic effect on the American people, but their effect on senior officials in the Carter Administration was even more important. The upheavals of November and December 1979 made plain how limited were American capabilities to project military power directly into the Persian Gulf region and galvanized the Administration to take action to correct the deficiencies that were now glaringly apparent.

Having been sensitized to the dangers to American interests and made aware of the limits on the ability of the United States to respond quickly to military challenges in the vicinity of the Persian Gulf, senior members

of the Carter Administration were predisposed to regard any further shocks as posing an exceedingly grave danger. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan at the end of December thus crystallized and hardened fears that had emerged a month earlier; it also raised new fears as to whether the move into Afghanistan would be confined to that country or was merely the first step in an attempt to extend Soviet control over Pakistan, Iran, and ultimately the Arabian Peninsula. In the weeks that followed, the consensus within the Administration was that the events of the last two months of 1979 meant that it was 1947 all over again; just as the Truman Administration had built a political and military structure of alliances, bases, and aid agreements to contain Soviet expansionism in Europe, so now was it the duty of the Carter Administration to do the same to safeguard Western interests in the oil resources of the Persian Gulf.

The ensuing controversy in the United States over President Carter's pledge to use force if necessary to defend Persian Gulf oil had the effect of throwing the Administration on the defensive, both as to whether the United States had sufficient military forces to uphold the President's pledge and concerning the role of the European allies in the defense of shared Western interests. Limitations on the ability of the United States to project military power into a region so far away and so close to the Soviet Union suggested to many in the United States that it would be essential to call on the European allies to supplement American efforts. The armed forces of the European members of the alliance, however, were so heavily oriented toward the defense of their home regions that any allied contribution to the American buildup in the vicinity of the Persian Gulf would of necessity be relatively small. Even the larger European allies, such as Great Britain and France, had only a very limited capability to project military power into the Indian Ocean region.

Military constraints, however, were overshadowed by political considerations, which made it essential that the Europeans be seen as joining in the venture that the Carter Administration had set in motion. It would

not look right, especially in an election year, for the United States to be running risks and taking on the burden of defending the West's access to Persian Gulf oil when it was well known that the Europeans were much more dependent on that oil than was the United States. This made it imperative that the Carter Administration secure the active cooperation of the European allies, and that they be seen as joining with the United States in the effort to build a credible Western military presence close to the Persian Gulf.

The Carter Administration encountered problems from the start in its efforts to secure the cooperation of the European allies. There was considerable disagreement within the alliance concerning the implications of the Soviet move into Afghanistan for European security, and the Administration's insistence that the alliance respond with actions as well as words was viewed by some European members as unnecessarily provocative.⁹ The Europeans did not agree that the Soviet move meant that it was 1947 all over again; they were not enthused about the prospect of a second round of the Cold War. While the Europeans accepted the American argument that the invasion had changed the strategic situation and that some response was essential, they sought to ensure that whatever response was agreed on would not jeopardize the increased trade and family contacts with the East that had been one of the principal European gains from the years of detente. They also sought to ensure that any alliance response would not be so costly as to severely strain national budgets.

In the end, the Carter Administration and the European allies were able to agree both on a modest package of steps to shore up the military balance in Europe and on a division of labor toward the Southwest Asia region, whereby the United States would take the lead in projecting military power into the region while the Europeans would supplement American efforts by taking the generally modest steps that were within their means in the areas of security assistance, economic aid, military deployments, and support for American forces. But the handling of the issue was marred by public sniping that left a bad taste all around. A

senior Pentagon official wondered out loud if the Europeans were as interested in their own defense as was the United States,¹⁰ while some European officials accused the Carter Administration of jeopardizing the relative harmony that had been achieved in Europe by overreacting to a minor upheaval in a distant theater.

More important than the sniping was the impression that lingered as a result of this episode. What was noticed in the United States was not the agreements that were reached but rather the reluctance of the Europeans to respond promptly to American requests for assistance at a time when the United States appeared beleaguered and in need of their aid. What lingered was the impression of a Europe that had lost interest in sharing the burdens of the alliance and which cared only about reaping the benefits. This impression would have a powerful effect on European-American relations during the first two years of the Reagan Administration's tenure.

The transfer of power from one Administration to another often brings a temporary glow to European-American relations. The public sniping that characterized the relationship during the Carter Administration's last year very likely contributed to this phenomenon by raising hopes in Europe that the incoming Reagan Administration would bring with it a steadier approach that would be more responsive to European concerns. But while the Carter Administration used the glow that accompanied its accession to power to win the Europeans' consent to an ambitious Long-Term Defense Program intended to revitalize the alliance, President Reagan and his associates adopted a more strident approach that soon led to new strains in European-American relations.

The defense budget for fiscal year 1982 submitted by the Carter Administration as one of its last official acts envisaged real growth in defense spending of about five percent; President Reagan and his advisers quickly let it be known that they considered that figure inadequate and that ten percent or more was needed. Officials in the new Administration also made it clear that they

intended to take a tougher stance, at least verbally, toward the Soviet Union, and that they were more skeptical of arms control initiatives than were their predecessors. Nor was the new Administration reticent when it came to criticizing what it saw as laggardly defense efforts by the Europeans, although the criticisms were selective and directed mainly at West Germany, the ally with perhaps the most impressive record of strengthening its armed forces during the 1960s and 1970s. Administration spokesmen suggested that they expected greater defense efforts from the Europeans and implied that if such efforts were not forthcoming the United States might be compelled to reconsider its policy of defense cooperation with Europe within the framework of the alliance.

Perhaps the most serious problem with all the talk of toughness and higher defense spending that accompanied the Reagan Administration's first year was that it seemed to frighten the citizens of the countries of Western Europe more than anyone else. Almost as shocking to Americans as the seizure of the Embassy in Iran were the mass protests in Western Europe in 1981 and 1982, many of which mobilized hundreds of thousands of demonstrators and which seemed to identify the United States rather than the Soviet Union as the principal threat to peace. The Reagan Administration responded by decrying the apparent spread of neutralist and pacifist sentiment in Western Europe and by reviving suggestions that the Europeans had lost interest in defending themselves. The more that officials in Washington complained about the Europeans' shortcomings, the more this seemed to arouse those in Europe who argued that the United States had become dangerous and irresponsible and an untrustworthy partner for a detente-minded Europe. Recriminations of this sort fueled speculation about the viability of the alliance, and by the middle of 1981 predictions of its impending demise were fairly common. Some even suggested that the alliance was already on the brink of collapse and that it was only a matter of time before the decay reached the point of being irreversible.¹¹

A NEUTRALIST, PACIFIST EUROPE?

There can be no question that the alliance has been severely strained in recent years, but it nonetheless seems premature to conclude that the end is in sight. The strain that developed within the alliance in the aftermath of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and which seemed to worsen during the Reagan Administration's first year did not mark the first time that observers of NATO's affairs have claimed to detect signs of an impending collapse. All too often, tensions in the alliance have been exaggerated by analysts straining to make the point that this time the fatal crisis is really at hand.¹²

More important, many recent analyses of the alliance's problems and especially of the alleged shortcomings of the European members have lacked historical perspective. Suggestions from Americans both in and out of government that the Europeans have lost interest in defense and that neutralist and pacifist sentiments are spreading rapidly in Western Europe have failed to take account of the fact that many of the sentiments that some American observers have found annoying have always been present in Western Europe. What has changed is not so much the attitudes and beliefs of elites and mass publics in Europe as the salience of those attitudes and American sensitivity to them.

Indeed, recent claims that neutralist and pacifist sentiments have been spreading in Western Europe provide a good example of the failure to supply the evidence and historical perspective needed to support rigorous judgments on the condition of the alliance. These claims have been accompanied by a proliferation of catchwords and phrases intended to dramatize the changes supposedly occurring: "Euro-neutralism," "Hollanditis," "Denmarkization," and so on. What these claims overlook is that large segments of the publics of Western Europe have always found attractive the notion of keeping their countries out of quarrels between the United States and the Soviet Union. In the early 1950s, for example, one-third of West German respon-

dents on average took the position that Germany should stay out of the East-West struggle; the percentage of West German respondents preferring neutrality in the event of an East-West war rose from 37 percent in September 1952 to 46 percent in early 1954 to 53 percent in October 1954.¹³ In a February 1964 survey, 42 percent of West German respondents thought neutrality between East and West was preferable to friendship with the United States, while 49 percent believed the latter to be the more desirable course.¹⁴ Measured by public opinion surveys, neutralist sentiments do not appear to be any more widespread in the Europe of the 1980s than they were in the 1950s and 1960s.¹⁵

More important, the European attitudes that have led some American analysts to question the value of the alliance are similar in important respects to attitudes widely held by Americans. Just as Europeans have been reluctant to become too deeply involved in conflicts outside of Europe to which the United States was a party, so too have Americans looked with disdain on the conflicts that resulted from the efforts of the Europeans to pursue their interests overseas. The United States was no more eager to support the Dutch in Indonesia, the British and French at Suez, or the French in Algeria than were the Europeans to become involved in American disputes with the Vietnamese, the Iranians, and the Cubans. The Reagan Administration's ambivalence about supporting the British during the Falklands War and its reluctance to jeopardize ties with Argentina is a recent case in point.

Similar complaints by Americans both in and out of government have centered on the claim that pacifism has been spreading in Western Europe in recent years. The attitudes of elites and mass publics in Western Europe often are described as if they have been changing rapidly in recent years in the direction of hostility to the alliance and all that it stands for, especially military preparedness and the link with the United States. The claim that anti-defense movements are growing in strength in countries such as West Germany and the Netherlands is

a crucial link in the argument that the condition of the alliance is worse now than ever before.

Claims of this kind are misleading in three respects: first, they oversimplify the problem of judging the extent of pacifist sentiment in Western Europe; second, they fail to take into account that many Europeans have always been concerned and even frightened about the role of nuclear weapons in the alliance's plans for deterrence and defense; and third, they overlook some striking similarities in the attitudes of Europeans and Americans concerning the use of nuclear weapons as instruments of national policy.

The extent of pacifist sentiment in Western Europe is difficult to judge with confidence, because a willingness to state that one is prepared to fight in defense of one's country can be significantly influenced by the wording of questions in opinion surveys. Questions that omit any reference to the kind of weapons that would be used and to the location of the fighting generally elicit sizable majorities of Western Europeans who would prefer to fight rather than accept Soviet domination. In a May 1982 survey, for example, 74 percent of West German respondents and 75 percent of British respondents said they were prepared to fight rather than accept Soviet domination; only 19 percent and 12 percent, respectively, said they would be unwilling to fight. In the United States, 83 percent said they were prepared to fight; only six percent said it would be better to accept Soviet domination.¹⁶

However, when a national sample in West Germany was asked in a 1980 survey whether their country should fight to defend itself against an attack *on its soil*, only 64 percent agreed; 19 percent were opposed. When asked in the same survey if West Germany should defend itself against an attack even if the war were fought primarily on West German soil, only 53 percent agreed; 31 percent were opposed. Only 15 percent were in favor of defense against an attack if nuclear weapons had to be used on West German soil; 71 percent were opposed.¹⁷

The results of opinion surveys are ambiguous as to whether pacifist sentiments have recently been increasing or holding steady in Western Europe. Surveys taken in West Germany suggest that a desire to avoid war at all cost rather than use nuclear weapons for defense has increased since the 1950s. The greatest increases in this respect came in the 1960s and early 1970s, when detente emerged in Europe, rather than at the start of the 1980s. However, other surveys taken in West Germany in 1954 and 1955 found that nearly two-thirds of West German respondents opposed American nuclear strikes against the Soviet Union in the event of a nonnuclear attack by the Soviet Union on West Germany; only about one-fifth favored a nuclear response.¹⁸

It is also important to distinguish between an aversion to defense strategies based on nuclear weapons and an aversion to military preparedness. Opinion surveys of Dutch and West German attitudes suggest that the percentage believing a military counterbalance is necessary to offset Soviet power declined hardly at all between 1974 and 1982. More important, even among Dutch respondents who felt their chances of personal survival were zero or very small in the event of war in Europe, more than three-fifths agreed that it was better to defend the Netherlands against a Soviet attack rather than capitulate.¹⁹ Pacifism does not appear to be widespread in Western Europe in the sense that many West Europeans would refuse to fight under any circumstances, but many West Europeans are unwilling to resort to weapons that could result in the annihilation of their homelands.

Strong opposition to the use of nuclear weapons for defense is by no means found only in Europe. In a May 1982 survey, only one-fourth of American respondents thought the United States would be justified using nuclear weapons first in a war. Only 28 percent thought the United States would be justified using nuclear weapons first to stop a Soviet attack on Western Europe.²⁰ The Europeans who organized protest demonstrations in opposition to the deployment of

new nuclear missiles in their homelands were voicing sentiments similar to those expressed by the residents of Nevada and Utah, who opposed the presence of the MX in their states, as well as the residents of Boston, Chicago, San Francisco, and other American cities a decade earlier, who opposed the Nixon Administration's plans for constructing ballistic missile defense sites near their homes.

CAN THE ALLIANCE ENDURE?

There is of course no guarantee that the Atlantic Alliance will hold together, but on the whole a collapse seems unlikely. The strains that have appeared in recent years reflect long-standing concerns rather than novel or unprecedented developments. The lack of enthusiasm with which the Europeans greeted the Carter Administration's plans to shift American forces to the Indian Ocean reflected concerns first expressed in Europe during the Korean War about the diversion of American resources away from Europe as well as a fear of being engulfed in a Soviet-American conflict that started outside of Europe. Similarly, the apparent spread of "nuclear pacifism" in Western Europe in recent years is not the first time that European publics have rebelled against defense strategies that seemed to promise annihilation rather than protection. Protests of this kind were fairly common during the 1950s, as in the case of the "rebellion of the 20-year-olds" in West Germany during the rearmament debate, the *Kampf dem Atomtod* (Struggle Against Atomic Death) in West Germany in 1958, or the Aldermaston marches in Great Britain. The recent protests and demonstrations in Europe may appear to be an unprecedented strain on the alliance only because they have followed a period of nearly two decades during which European concerns were muted and European publics were quiescent because of the emergence of detente and the promise of reducing the danger of war through arms control.

The fears expressed during the protests and demonstrations of the last few years are

not a sign that the alliance is no longer valued by Europeans or that an American presence is no longer desired. Opinion surveys in recent years have consistently turned up large majorities in the countries of Western Europe who believe the alliance is still essential for the security of their country.²¹ The protests are instead a reminder of fears that have always been present in Western Europe and which have come to the surface whenever it has appeared as if the Europeans have lost control of their destiny, whether because of American actions outside Europe that suggested a heightened risk of war or because the alliance seemed to veer in the direction of a focus on nuclear war-fighting.

What this suggests is that many of the tensions and strains that have recently troubled the alliance stem from a failure to recall why the alliance was formed and why it has endured. With the exception of a brief period in 1950-51, few officials on either side of the Atlantic have seen a deliberate Soviet attack on Western Europe as a serious possibility. Instead, the contest has long been recognized to be a politico-psychological one, in which the principal threat to the West consisted of Soviet efforts to use the fear of war and its consequences to intimidate the countries of Western Europe into cutting their ties with the United States. The purpose of the alliance was not so much to coordinate war plans as to provide a visible sign of American support, which was essential if the Europeans were to be sufficiently reassured to stand up to Soviet political pressures.

The central dilemma that the United States has always faced in its policies toward the alliance has been to find ways to reassure the Europeans of American support and to encourage them to join in taking the steps necessary to maintain a military balance in Europe but without frightening them into believing that it was their ties to the United States that heightened the danger of war. Soviet policy, in contrast, has long sought to convince the publics of the European members of the alliance that it was precisely the link with the United States that was most likely to bring on the war that Europeans

have long feared. The controversy in Europe over the alliance's plans to restore a military balance there by deploying new continental-range nuclear missiles to offset Soviet deployments of SS-20 missiles and Backfire bombers is but the most recent example of the constraints under which American policy must operate and the opportunities open to the Soviets to play on the Europeans' fear of war.

Is there anything that can be done to diminish the fears that have become so salient in recent years and in that way bring an end to the mutual recriminations that have made the future of the alliance seem rather bleak? There are at least four ways in which the European-American partnership could be strengthened in the years to come.

First, it is important to recognize that both Americans and Europeans have an interest in steering discussions of alliance strategy away from war-fighting scenarios and nuclear targeting options. It serves no Western interest to suggest that an American President would find it easier to fire nuclear missiles at the Soviet Union if they were based in Europe rather than in the United States.²² To convey that impression is to heighten fears in Europe that the goal of American policy is to wage limited nuclear wars confined to Europe and to provide the Soviets with a potent propaganda tool with which to further their efforts to split the alliance.

By the same logic, it is a mistake to exaggerate Soviet advantages in tanks and combat manpower while denigrating the alliance's conventional forces, thus implying there may be no alternative to early and massive use of nuclear weapons should deterrence fail. Recent events in Poland suggest that Soviet lines of communication through that country could be secured in the event of war only by garrisoning the country with large numbers of Soviet troops to guard against sabotage and uprisings. Large numbers of Soviet troops would also be tied down in Czechoslovakia and Hungary. The East European members of the Warsaw Pact could hardly be expected to fight enthusiastically as part of an aggressive war against the West.

Second, essential to the goal of reassuring the publics of Western Europe is a sound military posture. Military solutions can never completely resolve political problems, but a sound military posture can be helpful in alleviating some of the fears that have arisen in Western Europe in recent years. If the alliance is to endure, its overriding goal must be to prevent nuclear wars, not to fight them. It must also strive to deny to the Soviets the political leverage that would come from obvious superiority in either nuclear or conventional forces. This means the alliance's forces should be sized and structured for deterrence rather than for nuclear warfighting. It also means that the alliance should avoid as much as possible a military posture that tempts preemption. Finally, the alliance should strive to avoid a military posture or strategic concept that would require early use of nuclear weapons in the unlikely event of another war in Europe.

Third, it would be helpful if American officials would adopt a less-patronizing stance toward the European members of the alliance. It is ironic that an Administration pledged to return power to local units of government whenever possible should believe that Washington offered a better vantage point than Bonn, Paris, or Rome from which to judge where the Europeans should purchase their supplies of natural gas. American officials have often claimed that the United States desires responsible partners, able to work with the United States rather than be dependent on it. They have been less willing to concede that the price of responsibility is independence, and that one consequence of independence is likely to be occasional disagreement. Disagreement does not mean the alliance is on the verge of falling apart. It is instead a normal feature of an alliance of democratic societies called upon to deal with issues as sensitive and difficult as those that arise in the course of making foreign and defense policy.

Americans should recognize that it is in their interest that the European members of the alliance have the stature and the wherewithal to pursue independent foreign policies. There are important areas of the world where the United States is restricted in

the presence it can maintain and in the influence it can bring to bear. Countries that may be wary of an extensive American presence are often eager to maintain ties with the West through one or more of the European members of the alliance. The more independent the Europeans are of the United States, the easier it will be for them to maintain a Western presence in areas where the United States is unable to perform that role.

Finally, it would be helpful if each new disagreement among alliance members were not greeted with exaggerated claims of the alliance's impending demise. It is essential that discussions of the alliance and its troubles retain a sense of perspective and an understanding of the obstacles it has overcome through the years. The ability to surmount past crises offers no guarantee that the alliance will be able to do so in the future, but an awareness of what obstacles were overcome in the past should make observers more cautious about concluding that each new crisis means the alliance is on the verge of collapse.

NOTES

1. The 12 original members were the United States, Canada, Great Britain, France, Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Denmark, Norway, Iceland, and Portugal. Greece and Turkey joined the alliance in 1952, West Germany in 1955, and Spain in 1982.

2. On this point, see Stanley Hoffmann, "New Variations on Old Themes," *International Security*, 4 (Summer 1979), 88. See also Martin Hillenbrand, "NATO and Western Security in an Era of Transition," *International Security*, 2 (Fall 1977), 3; and Lawrence Kaplan, "NATO: The Second Generation," in Lawrence Kaplan and Robert Clawson, eds., *NATO After Thirty Years* (Wilmington, Del.: Scholarly Resources, Inc., 1981), pp. 3-4.

3. On this point, see Escott Reid, *Time of Fear and Hope* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1977), chaps. 2, 11, and 15.

4. As late as 1951, General Eisenhower told congressional visitors to his headquarters in Paris that the purpose of the American military presence in Europe was to gain time for the Europeans to build up their own forces, and that he hoped to begin withdrawing American forces from Europe within three years. On this point, see Stephen Ambrose, *Eisenhower: Soldier, General of the Army, President-Elect, 1890-1952* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1983), p. 506.

5. Recent examples would include Eliot Cohen, "The Long-Term Crisis of the Alliance," *Foreign Affairs*, 61 (Winter 1982-1983), 325-43; Henry Kissinger, "A Plan to Reshape NATO," *Time*, 5 March 1984, pp. 20-24; and Donald Nuechterlein, "The Widening Atlantic: NATO At Another Crossroads," *The World Today*, 40 (August-September 1984), 321-26.

6. See, for example, Josef Joffe, "European-American Relations: The Enduring Crisis," *Foreign Affairs*, 59 (Spring 1981), 835-51; Stanley Hoffmann, "NATO and Nuclear Weapons: Reasons and Unreason," *Foreign Affairs*, 60 (Winter 1981-1982), 327-46; and Robert Tucker, "The Atlantic Alliance and Its Critics," *Commentary*, 73 (May 1982), 63-72.

7. The shifting basis for claims of the alliance's greatest crisis ever is discussed in more detail in Wallace J. Thies, *An Alliance In Crisis*, chap. 1 (forthcoming).

8. Bradley Graham, "NATO: Changing Alliance," *The Washington Post*, 12 May 1980, p. A1; Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., "Tribulations of the Alliance," *The Wall Street Journal*, 22 May 1980, p. 20; and Michael Getler, "Crises Put New Strains on Alliance," *The Washington Post*, 24 May 1980, p. A1.

9. European-American divergences on the issue of Persian Gulf security are discussed in more detail in Joffe; Stanley Hoffmann, "The Crisis in the West," *New York Review of Books*, 17 July 1980, pp. 41-48; and Karl Kaiser et al., *Western Security: What Has Changed? What Should Be Done?* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 1981).

10. Robert Komer, quoted in "Collecting a NATO Debt," *Aviation Week and Space Technology*, 21 April 1980, p. 13.

11. See, for example, "Did You Say Allies?" *The Economist*, 6 June 1981, p. 11; Leslie Gelb, "NATO Is Facing a Paralysis of Will, Experts Contend," *The New York Times*, 12 July 1981, pp. 1, 6; and Irving Kristol, "NATO At a Dead End," *The Wall Street Journal*, 15 July 1981, p. 20.

12. See, for example, Irving Kristol, "Does NATO Exist?" *Washington Quarterly*, 2 (Autumn 1979), 45-53; and Walter Hahn, "Toward a New NATO Consensus," in Walter Hahn and Robert Pfaltzgraff, eds., *Atlantic Community in Crisis* (New York: Pergamon Press, 1979), especially pp. 58-63.

13. Richard and Anna Merritt, *Public Opinion in Semi-sovereign Germany* (Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1980), p. 25.

14. Karl Deutsch et al., *France, Germany and the Western Alliance* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1967), p. 118n.

15. A more detailed treatment of trends in European attitudes is presented in Bruce Russett and Donald Deluca, "Theater Nuclear Forces: Public Opinion in Western Europe," *Political Science Quarterly*, 98 (Summer 1983), 179-96. See also Wallace J. Thies, *The Atlantic Alliance, Nuclear Weapons, and European Attitudes: Re-examining the Conventional Wisdom* (Berkeley: Univ. of California, Institute of International Studies, 1983).

16. *World Opinion Update*, 6 (July-August 1982), p. 99.

17. Kenneth Adler and Douglas Wertman, "Is NATO in Trouble? A Survey of European Attitudes," *Public Opinion*, 4 (August-September 1981), 10.

18. These surveys are presented in Connie De Boer, "The Polls: Our Commitment to World War III," *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 45 (Spring 1981), 128; Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann, "Are the Germans 'Collapsing' or 'Standing Firm'?" *Encounter*, 58 (February 1982), 79; Adler and Wertman, pp. 10-11; and Hans Speier, *German Rearmament and Atomic War* (Evanston, Ill.: Row, Peterson & Co., 1957), p. 253.

19. Jan Stapel, "Surveys by Netherlands Gallup Affiliate Reveal Extent of 'Hollanditis,'" *The Gallup Report* (January 1983), pp. 20-21; De Boer, p. 129; and Noelle-Neumann, p. 78.

20. Judith Miller, "Poll Shows Nuclear Freeze Backed If Soviet Doesn't Gain," *The New York Times*, 30 May 1982, p. 18.

21. See, for example, the surveys presented in Russett and Deluca and in Adler and Wertman.

22. McGeorge Bundy, "America in the 1980s," *Survival*, 24 (January-February 1982), 27.