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The Future of Transatlantic Alliance: Global and Regional Security

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Abstract

Beginning of the post-Cold War era and the emergence of the unipolar world with the USA as the sole hegemon in the system led to a debate about the transatlantic alliance between the USA and Europe. Would the alliance survive annihilation of the common enemy? Although the debate is not as lively as it was 30 years ago, the same question arises frequently almost after every major international event. Can we give a definitive answer to the question? If not, why? This paper first contextualizes main camps of the debate with reference to three criteria to uncover the root causes of divergence among analysts: scope of observed change, theoretical lenses, and the level of analysis. I argue that scholars disagree over the answers because of the meaning they attribute to systemic change in IR, preferred theory of IR and preferred level of analysis. The paper then focuses more on global and regional security implications of repeated crises. How would a prolonged rift affect regional security in Europe and the globe? It argues that the future is less interesting than either side of the extreme predictions of total divergence or a full security community.

Keywords: *Transatlantic alliance, American foreign policy, European security, regional security*

I. Introduction:

One of the defining elements of the post-WW II international system is the alliance between the United States and Western European countries, which is labeled as the *transatlantic alliance*. The creation of the Western sphere of influence (as opposed to Soviets' sphere) was accomplished as a result of the U.S. leadership which is accepted by other countries of the liberal world. The U.S. played the role of a hegemon which was enabled by

the willing acceptance of other smaller powers during their opposition to socialist block. The ascendance of the U.S. to the leadership position of the liberal world, in other words, was not achieved by coercion but by consent. Hence, the U.S. became an “empire by invitation.”¹

The logic of the Cold War strategy for both superpowers was building a world-wide coalition of states to increase the power of one’s block, to contain the opposition forces, or to secure strategic resources such as straits, or oil. That means, the liberal-democratic coalition of the Cold War is not limited to transatlantic alliance; to the contrary it included non-Western countries and even non-democratic ones. However, the heart and center of the Western block was the settlement reached by Western European governments and the U.S. What was this settlement about? Ikenberry summarizes the deal with reference to two theories of international relations. The first deal is a realist one. According to the realist agreement, “the United States supplies Europe with security and access to U.S. markets, technology, and supplies.” The second deal, which is a liberal one, envisages that “the European and Asian partners of the United states accept U.S. leadership within a liberal institutional order in which America binds itself to a set of agreed-upon institutions.”² In a similar fashion, Cox argues that the transatlantic relationship was created because of three necessities: the need to manage Soviet power; the imperative of creating a framework within which the European powers could work out their own differences; and of protecting American interests on the continent.”³

According to Ikenberry’s apt summary and Cox’s analyses, we can conclude that both of these bargains between U.S. and Europe carry heavy influence of the Cold War

¹ Geir Lundstad, ‘Empire by invitation? The United States and western Europe, 1945–1952’, *Journal of Peace Research* 23: 3, 1986, pp. 263–77 Quoted in Noetzel, T., & Schreer, B. (2009). “Does a multi-tier NATO matter? The Atlantic alliance and the process of strategic change” *International Affairs*, 85(2), p.213

² Ikenberry, G. J. (2008). *The End of the West?: Crisis and Change in the Atlantic Order*. Cornell University Press. Quoted in Kopstein, J. S. (2009). Anti-Americanism and the Transatlantic Relationship. *Perspectives on Politics*, 7(02), p.373

³ Cox, M. (2005). “Beyond the West: Terrors in Transatlantia” *European Journal of International Relations*, 11(2), 203 -233

environment. The realist bargain, which is about security concerns of Europe, can only be understood against a Soviet threat. Beside other regions of the world, the Cold War was primarily fought over European continent, which is symbolized by a real physical wall dividing the West and East Germany. Likewise, the liberal bargain, which is about liberal institutions of democracy, human rights, freedoms, market economy etc. has to be contextualized within the Cold War atmosphere. Although these institutions of the liberal world are supposed to be universal, they were also part of the propaganda of the West to claim moral superiority. The discourse of American dream, economic development, affluence, and consumer society were among the weapons of the Western block during its fight against socialism. I think we can argue that the realist bargain is institutionalized by NATO; and the liberal bargain is institutionalized through a variety of institutions such as the EU, Marshall Plan, IMF, human rights conventions.

The transatlantic alliance, the establishment of which goes back to 1940s, is one of the most successful examples of alliance building. It is the most enduring and important alliance of the 20th century, which is to be accepted as a “textbook case” according to Cox.⁴ It is also argued that transatlantic alliance is more than an ordinary military cooperation. As early as 1950s Karl Deutsch articulated that view and used the term “security community” (instead of alliance) to signify idiosyncratic nature of the relation between U.S. and Europe.⁵ Although, I think that it is more a hope for Deutsch than an observation in such an early period of the alliance, it nevertheless points to multifaceted relation between two sides of the Atlantic.

If the establishment of the transatlantic alliance is embedded in the Cold War world, how should we understand it in the post-Cold War environment? If the *raison d'être* of both realist and liberal bargains that created transatlantic alliance is existence of a common threat,

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Deutsch, Karl W., Sidney B. Burrell, Robert A. Kann, Maurice Lee, Jr., Martin Lichterman, Raymond E. Lindgren, Francis L. Loewenheim, and Richard W. van Wagenen. 1957. *Political Community and the North Atlantic Area in the Light of Historical Experience*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. Quoted in Kopstein, J. S. (2009). “Anti-Americanism and the Transatlantic Relationship”. *Perspectives on Politics*, 7(02) p.367

the Soviet Union, what would be the correct way to analyze the relations between U.S and the European countries after the demise of that threat?

Although I will deal with these questions in depth below, as a preliminary discussion it would be useful to focus on an analogy which is used by some scholars who answered the questions above differently. Many authors used a marriage metaphor to discuss the relationship. For some it is a successful but “unhappy marriage”; or a marriage of minds rather than hearts.⁶ It is successful in the sense that the purpose of the marriage -protection from the enemy- is achieved; yet unhappy in the sense that, the worldviews or the desires of the partners do not always match, which resulted in cases such as Suez crisis. For some others, on the other hand, the relationship is both a necessary and a desired one. Kopstein writes that “Americans and Europeans not only needed to be friends but also wanted to be friends.”⁷

For both interpretations it is a necessary partnership. The point of difference, however, is about whether it is willed by two sides or not. The end of the Cold War is critical to test this point of contention. If the members of the transatlantic alliance are together only because they have to stand together against the Soviet threat, the alliance has to collapse after that. Yet, after 20 years from the end of Cold War, we did not witness such a break-up. Can this be easily interpreted as the success of one argument over the other? I do not think so. I contend that a better way to approach the question is to avoid totalistic judgments which force us to make either-or statements. It is not fruitful to argue that either members of the alliance have to agree on everything or that they are not part of a security community. There are many instances where member countries willingly built coalition forces to act together. Likewise, there are instances where same countries opted to act contrary to policies of cooperation.

⁶ Howard, M. (1999) ‘NATO at fifty: An unhappy successful marriage: Security means knowing what to expect’, *Foreign Affairs*, 78:3, p.164 Quoted in Dunn, D. H. (2009). *Assessing the Debate, Assessing the Damage: Transatlantic Relations after Bush*. *British Journal of Politics & International Relations*, 11(1), p.5

⁷ Kopstein, J. S. (2009). *Anti-Americanism and the Transatlantic Relationship*. *Perspectives on Politics*, 7(02) p.367

Hence, we have to search for the underlying conditions which lead to convergence or divergence in policies of Western states.

What does account for divergence (or convergence, to look at the question from the opposite angle) in the policies of members of the transatlantic alliance? What factors can explain the acts that disrupt the concert within the security community? Answering these questions is not only important to understand the last half century of world politics but also it is important to make well-grounded predictions for the future. In other words, if we can find out the real factors of divergence in the alliance, it will be useful for us to evaluate a variety of claims of scholars from various backgrounds about the future of the transatlantic alliance.

There is a variety of issues in which the major European powers followed divergent policies from the United States. For examples on the issues of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, preferred methods to deal with rogue regimes, Kyoto agreement, function of the International Criminal Court, role of international law, arms sales to China and Iranian nuclear facilities, US and European governments display divergent attitudes.

The aim of this paper is to critically examine approaches to the transatlantic alliance to find answers to the questioned mentioned above. In the second section following this introduction, I analyze major answers and their merits to these questions from various theoretical backgrounds and draw a conceptual map of the literature. In the third and final section, I evaluate the future of transatlantic alliance from the perspective of regional and global security issues.

II. Assessing the Literature: Main Positions in the Debate

The literature on the transatlantic alliance almost has a consensus on the assertion that the end of the Cold War has significant implications for the future of the Western block. That being said, the nature and the limits of the transformation have been subjects of scholarly

debate. While some argue that nothing will be the same again within the alliance after the Cold War, and that Europe-US divergence will increase, others argue that the new international system will not influence the survival of the alliance, but only transform some aspects of it. How can one evaluate and classify a growing literature on the question? Can we draw an intellectual map of this discussion, and if yes what should be the reference points and corner stones of this endeavor? I think we can analyze the literature with reference to three criteria: first is the scope of change; second is the theoretical perspective one uses; and third is the preferred level of analysis.

To begin with, the literature on the future of the transatlantic alliance can be classified according to the scope of change the contributors to this literature predict. We can observe one moderate and two extreme claims when we look at how different authors analyze the limits of the transformation. On the one hand, there is “nothing will be same again” argument. According to this assertion, as a result of major transformations in the international system with the end of Cold War, the Western alliance would split apart. The EU would act according to its own definition of interest, and this would contradict with that of the U.S. The best example to illustrate this point is the second Iraq war which demonstrated that the West is not a unified international actor anymore. One of the first advocates of this position is Robert Kagan. According to Kagan, in the post-Cold War international environment, the rift between the United States and Europe has increased to an unbridgeable level that divergence is inevitable. He writes that “given that ‘a weak Europe has moved beyond power, the United States has no choice but to act unilaterally.’”⁸

On the other hand, there is “nothing much changed” argument. According to this assertion, the crisis within the Western alliance is not a novel phenomenon specific to the

⁸ Kagan, R. (2002) ‘Power and weakness’, *Policy Review*, June/July, p.1. Quoted in Dunn, D. H. (2009). “Assessing the Debate, Assessing the Damage: Transatlantic Relations after Bush”. *British Journal of Politics & International Relations*, 11(1), p.11

post-Cold War world; members of the alliance used to experience similar kinds of tensions during the Cold War too. The Suez Canal crisis and disagreements over German re-armament were not less severe than crisis over Iraq. However, the alliance managed to deal with these crises in the past and survived. Likewise, some conflict of interest will be definitely experienced among members of the alliance, but they will not cause it to collapse. Thies, for example, argues that there is an “alliance crisis syndrome” which means that almost as a cyclical pattern, people argue that transatlantic alliance is in crisis in every decade, if not in every year. He cites Kissinger’s statements to substantiate his claim and writes that “Henry Kissinger has pronounced the Alliance in serious trouble in six different decades: the 1950s, the 1960s, the 1970s, the 1980s, the 1990s, and most recently in 2003.”⁹

A more “middle way solution” is provided by those who argue that although the end of Cold War has significant influence on the alliance; it is not a threat for the survival of alliance. According to this argument, the new challenge to the future of Western community will cause certain transformations and new arrangements within the alliance, but the Western block will continue to exist as powerful unit in the world. Noetzel and Schreer conceptualize this transformation for NATO by the “multi-tier NATO” formula.¹⁰ According to the authors, the challenge to the transatlantic alliance in the new international system created a new arrangement for NATO which created a subtle division of interest in the organization. For Noetzel and Schreer the first tier is composed of Anglo-Saxon allies, the second tier includes Germany and France and the third tier is formed by central European countries. Although these three tiers have different priorities, “NATO will continue to deliver on its most

⁹ Thies, W. J. (2007). “Was the US Invasion of Iraq NATO’S Worst Crisis Ever? How Would We Know? Why Should We Care?” *European Security*, 16(1), p.32

¹⁰ Noetzel, T., & Schreer, B. (2009). “Does a multi-tier NATO matter? The Atlantic alliance and the process of strategic change” *International Affairs*, 85(2), 211-226

important political goal, which is to provide security and stability in the Euro-Atlantic region.”¹¹

The second way to assess the literature on the future of the transatlantic alliance is through the international relations (IR) theories perspectives that the scholars who contribute to debate choose. Those who are looking at the question from a realist standpoint argue that the Western alliance was made possible because of a common threat, namely the USSR. With the collapse of the Soviet bloc, so the argument continues, there is no reason to believe that Europe and the U.S. will stand together. Maybe not the days, but definitely the years of NATO are limited. The EU will try to balance the U.S.’ unilateral power and the world will once again be a multi-polar one.¹² Mearsheimer even argued that, with growing nationalist sentiment in Europe, the continent would propel ‘back to the future’ of continental strife.¹³

Liberal analysts, on the other hand, argue that the collapse of the USSR will not inevitably lead to the collapse of Western block.¹⁴ International institutions, treaties, multiple levels of networks, historically rooted diplomatic ties have tamed anarchy among member states of the alliance. As a result, the risks of unpredictability and cost of staying together have been decreased considerably, which makes survival of the alliance a rational choice for concerning parties. For liberal theorists, transatlantic relations are more than an ordinary military alliance; it is more like a “security community” which emphasizes endurance of the relationship even though one of the ties that links the partners is broken down. The members

¹¹ Ibid p.22

¹² Walt, S. (2004) ‘The Imbalance of Power: On the Prospects for Effective American-European Relations’. *Harvard Magazine*, vol. 16, pp. 32-35. Waltz, K. (1993) ‘The New World Order’. *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, vol. 22, pp. 187-196.

¹³ Mearsheimer, J. J. (1990) ‘Back to the Future: Instability in Europe after the Cold War’. *International Security* vol. 15, pp. 5-56. Quoted in Dunn, D. H. (2009). “Assessing the Debate, Assessing the Damage: Transatlantic Relations after Bush”. *British Journal of Politics & International Relations*, 11(1), p.11

¹⁴ Fuchs, D. and Klingemann, H.-D. (2008) ‘American Exceptionalism or Western Civilization? In Anderson, J., Ikenberry, J. G., and Risse, T. (eds.) *The End of the West? Crisis and Change in the Atlantic Order*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, pp. 247-262

of the community share a sense of “we-ness” and to be included in it the candidates have to be “more like us” according to Adler.¹⁵

Likewise, constructivists share the basic prediction of liberal IR theorists, yet on different grounds. Those who use constructivist lenses argue that 50 years of history of the alliance have transformed identities of member states to the direction that they perceive each other as part of their definition of the *self*. Through experience, practices, and history, the concept of West in the minds of the member states has been transformed into a common identity. It is not an ordinary alliance but rather it is a community. This new definition of “we” makes survival of the Western block possible even after the disappearance of its main *raison d’etre*, the Soviet threat.

The third way to evaluate the literature on the future of the transatlantic alliance is through the levels of analysis that contributors to the literature use. Some of the analysts use a systemic level of analysis which directs them to focus on the effects of the collapse of the USSR and emergence of the unipolar world in which the U.S. is the only superpower. Thus, the future of the transatlantic alliance is understood as a function of great power rivalry.¹⁶ According to this kind of analysis, neither domestic conditions of countries nor individual political leaders are responsible for the new outcomes of the international system. Cox writes, for example, that the “drift of sorts was thus well under way long before the Bush team took office.”¹⁷ Rather, the roots of the new crises between the U.S and EU, such as Iraq war, should be traced to independent foreign policy making capacity of Europe which became possible by the demise of the Soviet Union that threatens Europe. U.S was no more able to

¹⁵ Adler, E. (1997) ‘Imagined (Security) Communities: Cognitive Regions in International Relations’ *Millennium* vol. 26, p.257. Quoted in Pertti Joenniemi “Difference within Similarity: Transatlantic Relations as a ‘Community of Neighbours’ DIIS Working Paper 2009:11. p.3

¹⁶ Waltz, K. (1993) ‘The New World Order’. *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, vol. 22, pp. 187-196.

¹⁷ Cox, M. (2005). “Beyond the West: Terrors in Transatlantia” *European Journal of International Relations*, 11(2), 203 -233

lead the Western alliance; and the reason for this, according to Layne, is that “it is easier to be Number One when there is a Number Two that threatens Number Three, Four and Five.”¹⁸

Some other analysts, on the other hand, use a state-level of analysis which directs more attention to domestic political factors within a country. According to this argument, to understand convergence and divergence between the U.S and EU on different time periods and on different foreign policy questions, ruling parties within each country is a useful variable. That means, during the years in which both the U.S. and major European states have republican/conservative parties in government, we can observe convergence. According to Kupchan, the divergence between the U.S. and EU during Bush’s presidency was overcome not only by a change in American leadership but also an accompanying change in Germany (from Schröder to Merkel) and in France (from Chirac to Sarkozy).¹⁹ An illustrative example of how domestic politics affects divergence and convergence in the alliance is the case of Germany during the election campaigns preceding Iraq war. Schröder used his opposition to American occupation of Iraq as an election campaign strategy, which was shown to be a helpful tactic to increase his votes. Likewise, Damro argued that “there are important domestic-international linkages to explain how and why the EU and U.S. agreed on non-treaty Bilateral Competition Agreement.”²⁰

Lastly, some of the authors use individual level of analysis to understand issues of convergence and divergence in the Western alliance and explain crises according to that level. Influential characters, such as Charles de Gaulle, with their charismatic personalities have influence on the crises within the alliance. Hatred of some leaders, such as Bush, reinforces anti-American sentiments in European populations which in turn adversely affect the

¹⁸ Layne, C. (2003) ‘America as European hegemon’, *The National Interest*, 72:28, p.28 quoted in Dunn, D. H. (2009). “Assessing the Debate, Assessing the Damage: Transatlantic Relations after Bush”. *British Journal of Politics & International Relations*, 11(1), p.15

¹⁹ Kupchan, C. A. (2008) ‘The transatlantic turnaround’, *Current History*, March, 14–15 p. 139

²⁰ Damro, Chad. (2006) “Transatlantic Competition Policy: Domestic and International Sources of EU-US Cooperation” *European Journal of International Relations* Vol. 12(2) pp. 171-196 p.171

transatlantic alliance. Chiozza writes that “attitudes towards the United States were primarily shaped by the ‘human element’: a President who personifies an era and the American people themselves.”²¹ The good side of this story is that, when a non-liked leader loses office in general elections, it is easily possible to change the negative factors to positive within a few years.

III. Discussion and Conclusions:

To go back to our main question, is transatlantic alliance in crisis? To ask more provocatively, is it going to collapse? To begin with, although it is more attractive to make radical arguments such as “in 10-20 years period, there will be no alliance in the West”, as Waltz did in early 1990s, I think the reality is less interesting. Despite disagreements on various issues, there are still powerful links that connect both sides of the Atlantic, like economic, ideational, and even national self-interests. The EU investments in Texas alone create employment opportunities for more than 233.000 people.²² Likewise, there are more EU soldiers in the Balkans and in Afghanistan than US military has.²³

Second, since the questions are important because they determine the possibilities of the ways we answer them, we have to ask right questions. To formulate the questions as “is EU playing a role to counterweight the U.S?” or “are we returning to balance of power politics in the West?” or even “is a war between the U.S. and EU a possibility?” I believe misguides the researcher. They do not help us to understand the detailed dynamics between the U.S. and EU. For example, if we answer the last question negatively, stating that “no, a war between U.S. and EU is not probable”, does this mean that there is no crisis? We can argue that wars are the most important phenomena of international relations; but since the

²¹ Chiozza, G. (2009). “A Crisis Like No Other? Anti-Americanism at the Time of the Iraq War” *European Journal of International Relations*, 15(2), 257 -289. We should note that Chiozza does not argue that the president is the sole responsible figure for these sentiments. Rather it has to be matched by the American people.

²² Bruton, John. “Transatlantic Relations: the EU Stance” in Kotzias and Liacouras (2006) *EU-US Relations*. Palgrave Macmillan p.143

²³ Nye, Joseph “Repairing the Transatlantic Rift” in Kotzias and Liacouras (2006) *EU-US Relations*. Palgrave Macmillan p.80

stakes in wars are very high and since costs and benefits associated with wars are extremely different than other types of relations, they signify the last point in a relation. Hence, they are not very helpful predictors.

Third, instead of a war between two allies, a more useful research project to understand the future of the transatlantic alliance should focus on “out-of-area” policies. Just as the Cold War was fought not in the mainland of two superpowers but in proxy states, a supposed rivalry between the U.S. and EU will be first reflected in the policies of two allies in other regions of the world. That is why Iraq war caused immense debate by both parties. Similar cases can be observed in their relations with China, Africa and Middle Eastern states in the future.

Fourth, most of the literature on the subject tries to find out a way to repair the damage that was caused by the Iraq war. They ask “what should be done to re-build the relations?” so that both parties benefit. Most of the scholars writing on the question predominantly focus on the EU and make suggestions to EU policy makers. While the only advice to the U.S. is to take others into consideration, and not to act unilaterally because in the long run it is against U.S.’ interest (an advice with no practical utility in my opinion), the scholars create a comprehensive to-do list for EU politicians. They are trying to find out the strategies for the EU to follow so that the EU would become more important, and the U.S. would take them seriously. That kind of a depiction implies two things: first, the EU needs the U.S. more than the U.S. needs EU; and second, the U.S. is the active side of the partnership in the sense that it makes the decision to be alone or with the EU. Hence the EU has to seduce the U.S. to stay together.

As far as the first implication is concerned, I think EU’s need of the U.S. is not higher than the U.S.’ need of the EU (if not lesser). That is because by the end of the Cold War, the immediate military threat to the EU countries disappeared. EU needed the U.S. military power

because of a possible USSR invasion. Now we do not have that threat anymore and there are no other powers from whom EU states perceive a realistic threat. One can oppose this argument by asserting that there is still a Russian threat of invasion against EU. Even if we accept this, the U.S. national interest would not tolerate such a move. That means, even if the U.S. and EU are not part of a same security community, U.S. policy makers would think that an expanded Russia (towards the continental Europe) would constitute a powerful rival against the U.S. As a result, I contend that the U.S. would support EU troops in such a hypothetical Russian invasion.

The second implication which is that the U.S. decides to go alone or stay with EU is similarly a one-sided story. I think the EU states are equally responsible for and have an agency on causing divergence. To suggest that the EU should do certain reforms in its institutional structure to attract attention of the U.S implies that it is because the weakness of the EU, especially of its hard power, that it is not taken seriously by the U.S. However, I think we can look at the picture from an opposite point of view and argue that the EU leaders felt that they are powerful enough to say “no” to the U.S. which was less probable during the Cold War. To put it differently, EU is less fearful to alienate the U.S. from itself because EU leaders are confident that they can manage the problems in the European continent by their own resources and that they can propose a more attractive world vision to the rest of the world than the U.S. Both of these options were not available during the Cold War.

Fifth, keeping the previous evaluation in mind, I think the suggestions of most of the scholars for the EU to develop a better Common Foreign and Security Policy and a powerful military force will not produce the supposed consequence. This suggestion is made from a U.S. point of view (even if some of its defenders are Europeans). We can as strongly argue that a more powerful Europe will cause increased divergence. That is because, if a less powerful EU prefers to go independently, why should it change this preference when it

becomes more powerful? Hence, a better question the U.S. policy makers should ask themselves: what should we do to convince Europeans?

Sixth, I think the U.S. policy makers miss a basic point: the policies of the U.S. are eradicating legitimacy of the U.S. as a world hegemon. They think that thanks to their superior military power, they can secure their self interest in every corner of the globe without consent of the “rest.” However, decreasing legitimacy of its actions and increasing anti-Americanism in the Middle East as well as in Europe limits the future military interventions of the U.S. The U.S. had achieved a successful nation-building process in the post-war Germany. Likewise, the Cold War was not only about number of nuclear war heads that the superpowers had but also about the cultural-ideological legitimacy. The U.S. won the Cold War not only because of its military capabilities but also because of the advertised “American dream”, human rights and liberties, consumer society, Hollywood films etc. as opposed to the “evil empire” of the USSR tyranny. The current conditions in Iraq, on the other hand, left in the minds of millions an impression of the U.S. far from this benign hegemon. As Stiglitz argues, “many of the sources of friction between the United States and Europe are really not a division between Europe and the United States, but between the United States and much of the rest of the world.”²⁴

Seventh, and last, the literature on the transatlantic alliance can be used as a prototypical example for the statement of Robert Cox when he said that “a theory is always for someone and for some purpose.”²⁵ The question asked almost by all of the scholars writing on the subject is “what should be done to save the alliance?” It is so much widespread that it gives the impression that it is the only way to study the alliance and it is the most natural question to ask which does not represent one’s position in the general relations of

²⁴ Stiglitz, Joseph. “Improving Transatlantic Relations in the Aftermath of the Iraq War” in Kotzias and Liacouras (2006) EU-US Relations. Palgrave Macmillan. p.56

²⁵ Robert Cox, (1981) Millennium Vol. 10 No. 2

power in the international politics. To show that the question depends on the power relations one stands in, and to question the absolute grounds of it for a more relative one, one can ask whether a Chinese scholar, a Russian diplomat or a minister in the cabinet somewhere in the Middle East would ask the question in a similar style. In other words, would saving the transatlantic alliance mean the same thing to these people as it does to Western academics and politicians; or would they try to answer the question of what should be done to make the transatlantic alliance collapse? My point is not that existence of transatlantic alliance is bad for the world or that it is good. Rather, I suggest remembering Cox statement that “a theory is always of someone and for some purpose.”

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