

Europe after the Cold War: interstate order or post-sovereign regional system?

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The changing structure of European order poses, for any student of international relations, some fundamental questions about the evolution of world politics.¹ Concepts of European order and of the European state system are, after all, central to accepted ideas of international relations. Out of the series of conflicts and negotiations—religious wars, coalitions to resist first the Hapsburg and then the Bourbon attempt at European hegemony—developed ideas and practices which still structure the contemporary global state system: the equality of states; international law as regulating relations among sovereign and equal states; domestic sovereignty as exclusive, without external oversight of the rules of domestic order. The ‘modern’ state system, modern scholars now agree, did not spring fully-clothed from the Treaty of Westphalia at the close of the Thirty Years’ War; it evolved through a succession of treaties and conferences, from 1555 to 1714. It remains acceptable, nevertheless, to describe the European state order as built around the Westphalian system.²

In the twentieth century, these rules have been modified but not replaced. The European state system—which was the international state system until almost a hundred years ago—has expanded into a global state system. The UN and other global institutions are based upon recognizably similar assumptions to those which governed the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century European orders, modified at the margins to limit the exclusive nature of domestic sovereignty and to give some large states more say in some institutions.

As this European system has extended across the globe, however, the now-regional European order has mutated. Divided into spheres of influence between two hegemonic powers after 1945, its Western states—under a benevolent American hegemony—accepted shared institutions, and limits on their sovereignty, which have crept gradually closer to the central issues of national sovereignty as their economies have integrated and their societies become more interdependent. The significance of this development for our understanding of international relations as a whole has to some extent been limited by the reluctance of most international relations scholars

¹ Earlier drafts of this article were presented as a 125th anniversary public lecture at the University of Wales, Aberystwyth, and as a paper for the third Pan-European International Relations Conference in Vienna in September 1998. I am grateful to Helen Wallace and Franziska Hagedorn for additional comments.

² There is a substantial recent literature reassessing the development of the Westphalian system. See, for example, Stephen D. Krasner, ‘Westphalia and All That’, ch. 9 in Judith Goldstein and Robert O. Keohane (eds.), *Ideas and Foreign Policy* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993); Alexander Murphy, ‘The Sovereign State as Political-territorial Ideal: Historical and Contemporary Considerations’, ch. 3 in Thomas J. Biersteker and Cynthia Weber (eds.), *State Sovereignty as Social Construct* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

to examine the regional international relations of Europe in much detail, and the predisposition of most students of European integration to start from Brussels and work outwards, rather than start from the changing European context and work in.

The technological and economic changes which constitute the phenomenon of globalization have had a particularly intense impact on the European region, for evident reasons. Core Western Europe—the Rhine valley and delta, reaching across the Western Alps into northern Italy and the Mediterranean coastline from Barcelona to Genoa, and across the Channel into southern England (the economic geographers’ ‘European banana’)—is one of the world’s most densely-populated regions, as well as one of the world’s most prosperous regions. The population of the EU-15 is, at 371 million, 40 per cent higher than that of the United States, living within a territory 35 per cent the size.³ The market and border regimes developed within Western Europe over the past fifty years are peculiarly favourable to the development of cross-border links. The ‘light touch’ border controls between the United Kingdom and its European partners are matched in their relaxed character outside Europe only on the US-Canada border. Between France and Germany, the Netherlands and Belgium, border controls have long since ceased to operate.

For students of globalization, therefore, the European region represents either a model which other regions are likely to follow, or an exception which demonstrates the importance of regulatory and border regimes, and of institutions and rules, in governing global development. The current expansion of this framework of regional institutions, regulations and regimes across the former socialist states of eastern Europe, as well as its extra-territorial extension across Europe’s dependent periphery to the east and south, offers a further case-study from which international relations scholars may wish to draw broader conclusions.

Though the European region has now become an intensely institutionalized order, the EU is not unchallengeably the defining European institution. Ten years after the Cold War ended, European political and security issues are managed as much through NATO as through the EU. The focus in this article is on the challenges to national governments and international institutions which the European region now presents, to which the EU and its member governments have to respond: the continuing transformation of (West) Europe through economic and social integration and technological change; the transformation of central and eastern Europe since 1989, as they have reoriented their political systems, economies and societies towards the West; and the efforts which Western institutions—most importantly NATO and the EU—have made since then to accommodate the drive by post-socialist regimes to ‘rejoin the West’. It then outlines some alternative scenarios for the future development of European order, relating them to competing theoretical assumptions about the dynamics of politics and international relations.⁴

³ This includes the almost-uninhabited Arctic regions of Sweden and Finland; the EU-12, before the 1995 enlargement, had 350 million people living in an area 25 per cent the size of that occupied by 263m Americans. Population density in the Netherlands and North Rhine-Westphalia is close to that of Singapore.

⁴ For evidence on the transformation of Western Europe, I have drawn extensively on chapters contributed to William Wallace (ed.), *The Dynamics of European Integration* (London: RIIA/Pinter, 1990), and on chapters contributed to Helen Wallace and William Wallace (eds.), *Policy-making in the European Union* (4th edn: Oxford University Press, forthcoming 2000). Other sources I have found particularly useful include Ole Tunander and others, *Geopolitics in Post-Wall Europe: Security, Territory and Identity* (London: Sage for PRIO, 1997), and the earlier studies by Hugh Miall, *Shaping the New Europe* (London: RIIA/Pinter 1993) and Christoph Bertram, *Europe in the Balance*

Rethinking Europe

Ten years after the end of the Cold War, the European region is moving towards a new pattern of international relations. Western Europe's established system of highly-institutionalized multilateral politics is being gradually expanded, to incorporate or associate the former socialist states to its east and south-east. But its structure, boundaries, and component units remain unclear. It is arguable that the region within which the modern state system emerged is now moving towards a post-modern and post-sovereign political system, in which authority will be shared among different levels of government—and in which the Westphalian concept of sovereignty will have disappeared, with a more diverse and open international civil society emerging in its place, with multiple levels of authority and governance. If the European region is now moving away from such operating assumptions in a radical way, then we have evidence for a revolutionary transformation of the established state system, which might in time extend to other regions.⁵

Realists reply, however, that the apparent emergence of a benign and civilian European international society, institutionalized through the EU, depends upon the continuation of American political and security leadership, institutionalized through NATO.⁶ The relationship between the EU and NATO is one of the least well-defined aspects of contemporary European international politics: rarely discussed within governments, let alone between the two international institutions. That is partly because any clarification of the institutional relationship would redefine the political relationship between the US and the major European governments (by which I mean Germany, France and Britain, and in the second rank Spain, Italy and the Netherlands); which all of these governments, for different reasons, were reluctant until very recently to address.⁷

Realists also reply that the political authority of national governments, as representatives of states, remain only marginally impaired by the development of economic and social interdependence; and that major governments still define and control the European international agenda. They see the compromises which emerged out of the Treaty of Amsterdam, and even more the political manoeuvring over appointments to the European Central Bank, as evidence that a new interstate order is emerging, based upon intensive multilateral bargaining among representatives of states—very different in style from the eighteenth and nineteenth century

(Washington: Carnegie Endowment, 1995). See also the interesting group of essays on *New European Orders, 1919 and 1991*, edited by Samuel F. Wells and Paula Bailey Smith (Washington: Woodrow Wilson Center/Johns Hopkins, 1996).

⁵ Robert Cooper, *The Post-modern State and the World Order* (London: Demos, 1996), lays particular stress on the transformation of security relations in the European region as providing evidence of an emerging post-sovereign order. This paper was originally written as a planning paper within the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

⁶ Josef Joffe, 'Europe's American pacifier', *Foreign Policy*, Spring 1984, pp. 64–82.

⁷ On the centrality of the American security guarantee to West European integration, see Alfred Grosser, *The Western Alliance: European-American relations since 1945* (London: Macmillan, 1980); Anton de Porte, *Europe Between the Superpowers: The Enduring Balance* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1986); Geir Lundestad, *Empire by Invitation: The United States and European Integration, 1945–1997* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).

European state systems, but not different in principle.⁸ The transformation of Europe, for them, consists in the partial disengagement of the United States since the end of the Cold War, in the gradual emergence of Poland as a major player alongside the major West European governments, and in the changing positions of Russia, Turkey and now-independent Ukraine on the periphery of the regional system.

Perhaps the most remarkable aspect of developments within the European regional system in the late 1990s is the speed of change, without shared concepts of where changes may lead to or what eventual shape of society or order should be pursued. The retirement of Helmut Kohl has removed from European politics the last protagonist for a federal political union in Europe, born of the bitter historical experience of the Second World War. Yet paradoxically West European states appear to be moving further away from the old intergovernmental model as their political leaders become more hesitant about where they may be moving to. A single currency has been introduced within the West European EU, without agreement on the political or economic implications of its introduction. Cooperation among police, intelligence agencies, customs and border/immigration agencies is growing rapidly, without any consensus about the implications for concepts of citizenship or democratic accountability. Economic and social transborder interactions continue to rise, while democratic politics remains stubbornly territorial; transnational elites coexist with surges of national populism. Even defence integration, since the Franco-British St. Malo declaration of December 1998, is at last coming onto the West European agenda.

Both the EU and NATO are committed in principle to radical enlargement to incorporate the former socialist states of central and eastern Europe, but without accepting that enlargement will necessarily transform the character of both institutions. The nation state remains the only accepted basis for legitimate representation in such institutions; but across Europe 'suppressed' nations are challenging the established structure of recognized nation-states. Within Western Europe several states are becoming looser entities, while in Eastern Europe weak states continue to emerge from national aspirations and discontents. The break-up of Yugoslavia may not yet have ended; the status of Kosovo and Montenegro hovers between autonomous region and independent state. Malta is now reviving its application to join the EU, alongside Cyprus, Slovenia, Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia; four of these are also pressing to join NATO. Accession to European institutions of a succession of states with populations and GNPs much smaller than those of sub-state entities within other member states—Catalonia, Lombardy, Flanders, Scotland, Bavaria—may strain the principle of sovereign equality, and the privileged position of states within the European system, to breaking point.

A number of underlying contradictions within the established West European multilateral (and multilevel) order should be noted:

⁸ This is the underlying argument of Andrew Moravcsik, *The Choice for Europe: Social Purpose and State Power from Messina to Maastricht* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998). See also Andrew Moravcsik and Kalypso Nicolaidis, 'Explaining the Treaty of Amsterdam: Interest, Influence, Institutions', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 37:1 (1999), pp. 59–86.

- States have ceased to act as gatekeepers between domestic and international politics in intra-European relations; but the dominant framework for political debate and political recruitment nevertheless remains the state.
- Substantial areas of previously national decision-making and regulation have been transferred into multilateral bargaining within international institutions; but mechanisms of political accountability have been left behind within nation-state structures.
- Transnational elites have flourished within this open West European space; transgovernmental coalitions have become a normal aspect of multilateral politics. Cross-border personal ties and communications hold European politics and economics together to a far greater degree than in the eighteenth and nineteenth century European systems. Yet for the mass of Europe's population identity, loyalty and culture remain firmly anchored in national symbols and institutions.
- Integration of policy areas formerly considered intrinsic aspects of domestic politics into multilateral European institutions has moved a long way over the past 15 years, affecting law and order, border controls, and currency. But the core issues of 'high politics'—foreign policy and defence—have so far remained clearly under state control, 50 years after the West European Union was founded, 30 years after European political cooperation began.

There is evidence here to support either a modified Realist approach or a transformationalist Idealist approach to an understanding of European international politics. Students of West European integration have long grappled with the problem of interpreting patterns of shared policymaking which from one perspective look functional and transnational, but from another perspective intergovernmental. Any attempt to describe and define the emerging character of this wider post-Cold War Europe is faced with a similar dilemma.

The transformation of Western Europe

Cold war rhetoric, before 1989, spoke conventionally of the 'two halves of Europe'. The reality exposed by the political and economic collapse of socialist regimes was that the countries to the west of the Iron Curtain represented the core of Europe—economically, politically, socially and culturally—as they had done for 1,000 years before 1945.⁹ The institutions which had 'integrated' eastern Europe, CMEA and the Warsaw Pact, rapidly collapsed; successor regimes clamoured to be allowed to join Western institutions, from the Council of Europe to the key institutions of NATO and the EU. The first postsocialist governments had very little idea of the implications of joining such institutions, let alone the constraints on their newly-regained sovereignty which they would impose. It is thus the West European system which is now in the process of expansion eastwards to form the basis of the post-Cold War regional order. The evolution of the West European system, both before and since

⁹ The argument here is set out more fully in ch. 2 of William Wallace, *The Transformation of Western Europe*, London: RIIA/Pinter 1990.

1989, provides one of the most important indicators of the likely shape of this wider emerging order.

The most distinctive governmental characteristic of this regional system is its intensive multilateralism. Geographical concentration and excellent transport links make it easy for national elites, from heads of government down, to interact in person, by phone or by video link, as regularly as they need. In 1998 prime ministers met together six times in the European Council, each time for the better part of two days: conference diplomacy of an intensity unimaginable a century ago.¹⁰ It has been a commonplace for 15 years that foreign ministers meet each other more often than they meet their colleagues within their own national Cabinets: in the General Affairs Council of the EU (which meets between 15 and 20 times a year), in informal meetings of EU foreign ministers, alongside their prime ministers in European Councils, in WEU ministerial meetings—and for those from larger states also in G8, in contact groups such as that which has handled the Bosnian conflict. Finance ministers have come to interact more intensively as the EU has moved towards a single currency; central bankers have become a collective body. Even interior ministers by the late 1990s were meeting as a group every two to three months, attending each other's seminars and conferences, on first name terms with each other.

If interaction were only among ministers, then it might still be possible for government to play two-level games, addressing different messages to separate domestic and foreign audiences. But the two audiences overlap, swap information, form transgovernmental coalitions, respond to transnational lobbies. European governance is above all governance by committee: through multilateral negotiation, mutual accommodation, intensive and extensive consultations and exchanges of information. Senior civil servants in all important national ministries in all West European states travel incessantly, up to two to three days per working week. Their diaries are shaped by the round of regular multilateral meetings, and the bilateral consultations which supplement them. Mutual interpenetration of governments and state administrations has extended further into joint training schemes, exchanges of personnel among national ministries, secondment from national administrations to the Brussels institutions of officials who later return to senior positions in national capitals. Alongside these, and out of these, have grown transgovernmental elite networks; centred around shared expertise, shared party groups, or shared administrative needs or client interests.¹¹ No other international region, no group of established states, has experienced this phenomenon of political and administrative interaction.

¹⁰ At the time of writing five European Councils were calendared in 1999, including a special European Council entirely devoted to judicial cooperation, measures against cross-border crime, and asylum and immigration policy, in Tampere, Finland in October. Most European heads of government also meet at the semi-annual NATO summits; those of the larger states meet with the US President and others in G8. Bilateral meetings build personal links, and coalitions, in between multilateral conferences.

¹¹ Fiona Hayes-Renshaw and Helen Wallace, *The Council of Ministers* (London: Macmillan, 1997); M. P. C. M. van Schendelen (ed.), *EC Committees as influential policy-makers* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998); Wolfgang Wessels, 'An Ever Closer Fusion? A Dynamic Macropolitical View on Integration Processes', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 35:2 (1997), pp. 267–99; Simon Hix and Christopher Lord, *Political Parties in the European Union* (London: Macmillan, 1997).

As the massive literature on West European integration has demonstrated, Western Europe as an international system has been undergoing an autonomous transformation over the past half-century, well underway before the geopolitical transformation of 1989–91. This process of transformation, both of the formal conduct of relations among states and of informal transborder interactions, surged further forward in the 1980s, and has continued through the 1990s. Western Europe has now moved far away from the nineteenth century state-to-state model. Some scholars, it is true, draw comparisons between the integrated economy and transnational elite of pre-1914 Europe and the circumstances of Europe today.¹² But economic barriers between European states were high in the years before 1914, border posts well defended.

The international community of contemporary Western Europe displays a number of distinctive features. Levels of transborder economic interaction are qualitatively higher than within any other international region.¹³ The expansion of regional trade in the 1960s, as tariff barriers were removed, has been reinforced by the development of integrated production across the region, with self-consciously 'European' companies producing finished articles from components procured from across the region, to sell across the region. The 'common market' achieved by 1970 has been succeeded by the 'single market' achieved by 1992, built through the harmonization and mutual recognition of previously-national regulations, food and safety standards, testing and inspection procedures. This European process has been paralleled by 'global' negotiations within GATT/WTO and OECD; which have in practice more closely resembled bilateral US-European negotiations, through which the US Administration has attempted to reconcile European regulations with American interests.

Measured by the standards of interstate relations rather than by those of an established federation, levels of transborder social interaction across Western Europe are also extraordinarily high. In nineteenth century Europe aristocrats and plutocrats moved across the continent, with the socially-excluded—Jews, urban unemployed—struggling across frontiers or leaving for the New World as migrants and refugees. The great mass of the population within European states however lived, worked and died entirely within their state boundaries, unless they were conscripted into military service abroad or—as after the First World War—the boundaries of their state changed around them.

We now have strong evidence of shifting concepts of social space within Western Europe. Tourism has moved decisively from a national to a European frame; sport (and sports stars and supporters) now operates as much on the European level as the national. Cross-border work patterns have developed, both for professional elites and for manual jobs like building workers and truck drivers. Some millions of well-to-do Europeans now own second homes outside their 'home' state; hundreds of

¹² See, for example, chapter 2 of Paul Hirst and Grahame Thompson, *Globalization in Question* (Cambridge, UK: Polity, 1996).

¹³ Integration of the Canadian and Mexican economies with that of the United States is in some ways comparable, institutionalized within the North American Free Trade Area (NAFTA). But the overwhelming size of the American economy within NAFTA limits the extent of mutual economic integration. The relative autonomy of the European single market within the world economy—the ratio of external trade to GDP—is comparable to that of the American economy. The EU is not however the world's largest integrated market, as Brussels officials like to claim; India and China, though less prosperous, represent larger internal markets in population terms.

thousands of northern Europeans have settled in retirement around the northern shore of the Mediterranean, echoing the larger numbers from the northern US who have retired to Florida.¹⁴ Rising levels of intermarriage have pushed West European governments into complex negotiations on common rules for the division of property and the custody of children on divorce. Cross-border shopping has mushroomed, exploiting differential tax rates. Student exchange continues to rise.¹⁵

Transborder communications have been transformed both by technological advance and through deliberate policy. 'Trans-European Networks' (TENs) is the title of an EU programme and budget line, as well as a description of the removal of the bottlenecks left around national borders by the strategic transport planning of nineteenth century states. The European traveller may now cruise along the motorways which cross Western Europe's historic battlegrounds: from Paris past the Somme to Waterloo and Brussels, from Kaiserslautern to the supermarket in Metz or Verdun. Trans-Europe Expresses (TEEs) take civil servants and businessmen, tourists and students, from Amsterdam to Basle, Milan to Munich; the opening of the Channel Tunnel has made it quicker to travel from London to Brussels and Paris than to Edinburgh or Plymouth.

The loosening of border controls foreseen in the Treaty of Rome has led gradually on to their further weakening, under the pressure of people and traffic crossing them, and from there to their effective disappearance, indeed deliberate abolition: not only among states with particular historical and geographical links (Benelux, the UK-Ireland and Nordic Travel Areas) but more widely through the 1985 Schengen Agreement and the 1997 Amsterdam Treaty. This loss of *national* control over the movement of citizens and aliens has been balanced by the growth of transnational cooperation among state law-enforcement agencies: police, customs, immigration, intelligence services, judicial administrations, interior ministries—the guarantors of domestic order, learning to work together now that domestic order can only be guaranteed through extensive international cooperation.¹⁶

One should however recognize that national differences remain important, national (and linguistic) boundaries still easily observable in patterns of exchange. Transborder labour mobility is 'sticky', in terms of the expectations of labour market economists, with levels of movement far lower than within North America in spite of the much smaller physical distances involved. Comparison of Western Europe's degree of economic and social integration with that of the United States puts into perspective how far away it remains from the United States of Europe which American and European enthusiasts in the late 1940s wanted to create.

The limits of political community are also evident in the weakness of European-level media, with the consequent absence of a shared public debate across this half-established West European space. Language barriers, cultural reference points, still sharply differentiate the reception and interpretation of news. The number of

¹⁴ See for example Keith Hoggart and Henry Buller, 'Retired British Home Owners in Rural France', *Ageing and Society*, 15 (1995), pp. 325–53. France, the largest state by physical area within the EU, is host to the largest number of expatriate second homes; followed by Italy, Spain and Greece.

¹⁵ *Student mobility in the European Community*, 27th Report of the Select Committee on the European Communities, House of Lords, 1997–98 (London: HMSO, HL-116 1997–8).

¹⁶ Monica den Boer and William Wallace, 'Justice and Home Affairs', ch. 18 in Wallace and Wallace, *Policy-making in the European Union* (4th edition: Oxford University Press, forthcoming 2000); *Dealing with the Third Pillar: the Government's perspective*, 15th Report from Select Committee on the European Communities, House of Lords, 1997–8 (London: HMSO, HL-73 1997–8).

Europeans who watch television from outside their home country remains minute; the *Financial Times*, the nearest Western Europe has to an international newspaper, prints in several countries but sells less than 100,000 copies in Europe outside Britain. National media, from newspapers to TV, respond to and reinforce national images and assumptions, interpreting the same event in different ways to different audiences.

Can one discern, as optimists for European integration would hope, the growth of a Europe-wide civil society? Here again the evidence is ambivalent. The integration of European elites—intellectual, economic, even political/administrative—has already been noted. Some European social movements have become more than loose coalitions, most of all in the environmental field; the ability of Greenpeace to mobilize protests across several West European states against BP on the Brent Spar issue was as impressive as it was mistaken. Some of the many European lobby groups which cluster around Brussels have come to form effective transnational networks; the European Round Table, for example, operates for its self-consciously European companies from one capital to another.¹⁷ But a strong national ‘stickiness’ is evident here, too. Cultural and political values differ widely from one national/state community to another. Animal welfare issues move British citizens to demonstrate, but not French; the international development movement in northern (and Protestant) Europe is not only more active, but focuses on different issues than its counterparts in the south. Different diasporas—Turks in Germany, Algerians in France, South Asians and Cypriots in Britain—orient domestic politics in different directions.

Some institutions which might in principle be thought natural motors for integration—banks, universities—are so strongly rooted in national institutions and national traditions as to prove deeply resistant to international integration. Cross-border bank mergers in Europe have proved far more difficult than mergers among companies. University collaboration and exchanges have struggled to overcome different assumptions about teaching, funding, academic hierarchy, and relationship to the state; there remain, for example, scarcely any professors from other European states in French and German universities, while British lecturers are challenging Italian treatment of non-Italian academic staff before the European Court of Justice.

The European Union is pursuing the idea of building ‘European citizenship’, espoused by the EC 20 years ago. European passports have been harmonized, and Europe’s citizens now file through its external borders in lines differentiated from those from third countries. The Maastricht Treaty gave EU citizens resident in other member states the right to vote in local and European elections, while officials from justice and interior ministries have negotiated common rules on divorce and child custody to cope with rising intermarriage. But many obstacles remain before one can talk dispassionately of a single European space for citizens. Distinctive national tax regimes complicate cross-border employment; registration requirements in several member states complicate the establishment of residence and the ownership of property. Ethnic minorities are subject to different treatment in different states, and

¹⁷ Sonia Mazey and Jeremy Richardson, ‘The Logic of Organization: Interest Groups’, ch. 11 in Richardson (ed.), *European Union: Power and Policy-making* (London: Routledge, 1996); Mazey and Richardson (eds.), *Lobbying in the European Community* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993).

have different degrees of entitlement to legal protection and to the acquisition of citizenship.

Western Europe can be said to represent a post-sovereign state order, rooted in the emergence of a loose regional sense of political community, a highly-integrated regional economy and intense mutual interaction among different levels of national, subnational and European-level governance. But it has not yet displaced the state as a dominant point of reference, in political or social life. The major step forward taken in 1999 to a single currency for most EU member states, managed by a European Central Bank, may take it further away from the Westphalian model, bringing fiscal policy, larger elements of taxation, and economic management as such, much more directly onto the European level. But the representatives of national governments are likely to remain for some time the major players in this complex game of multilateral multilevel politics that characterizes the transformed political system of Western Europe.¹⁸

The transformation of central and eastern Europe

The collapse of central European regimes in 1989–90 witnessed a brief flowering of social movements and popular demonstrations, often led by dissidents who had established contacts with sympathizers in Western Europe in the difficult conditions of the ‘second Cold War’ of ten years before. This wonderful surge of social movements however subsided as enthusiasm gave way to the hard choices of political and economic transition, presented by inexperienced politicians to unprepared electorates. Most dissidents failed to adapt to the compromises and the grind of day-to-day politics. They thus gave way to more conventional politicians, who knew how to organize national politics and rebuild state structures, and to play the tunes of national reassertion while negotiating the terms of association with Western institutions.

One paradox evident in central and eastern Europe after 1989 has been the reassertion of national sovereignty and independence within a political and economic framework which depended on access to sovereignty-constraining Western institutions. A linked paradox is that the achievement of full sovereignty for ex-socialist states—particularly for states emerging out of former federations, such as Estonia, Slovenia, Macedonia—has depended on their acceptance by Western institutions as appropriate associates, even as potential candidates for future membership. Another has been the perceived importance of state- and nation-building in the process of transition, within a context in which state institutions had been partly discredited by socialism, and national unity was hard to rebuild among those who had survived 50 years of socialist domination through different compromises with the regime.

Commitments to Western integration were made well before the implications of integration for national autonomy were understood. In the first flush of post-socialist optimism, central European governments seem to have hoped that the West

¹⁸ I have developed this argument at greater length in ‘The Sharing of Sovereignty: The European Paradox’, *Political Studies*, 47, special issue on sovereignty, pp. 503–521, 1999.

would welcome them with few conditions and with open arms. The negotiations on Trade and Cooperation Agreements between the EU and the Polish, Czech and Hungarian Governments, during the course of 1990–91, were thus a painful and disillusioning experience. Willingness on the part of post-socialist governments to adopt Western models, in part or in full, as the processes of legal and administrative transition rebuilt structures of domestic sovereignty and redefined the boundaries between state and civil society, was met by the imposition of detailed conditions by the EU, by NATO, by the EBRD and other Western bodies.¹⁹

The process of transition in the countries between Germany and Russia has therefore become one in which the targets set have been imposed from the outside, from the dominant West, supported by externally-provided advisers and training programmes. Brief initiatives for cooperation within the region—the Italian-initiated ‘Pentagonale’, the Visegrad group—have given way to competition, to gain preferred access to Western markets and institutions, and preferred status and attention in the major West European capitals. Once the first flush of euphoria had evaporated, in 1990–91, most governments of ‘the lands in between’ concluded that dependence on the West was a strongly preferred alternative to dependence on the East—on Russia. Memories of the uncertain interwar years, when overlapping claims to unite national groups with ambitiously-drawn state boundaries entrenched regional insecurity, reinforced this emerging consensus that security, and prosperity, were to be found through formal integration with their Western neighbours, accepting the conditions and limitations on sovereignty which they imposed.²⁰ Transition, in effect, has become a process which ends in incorporation—of the weak states of central and eastern Europe into the structures established to manage Western Europe.²¹

Over the nine years since Poland first moved to a non-socialist government, patterns of informal integration have already done much to reorient the geographically closer and more economically-advanced states within the region into West Europe’s economic and social space. Seventy per cent of Poland’s trade in 1997 was with the West; Czech and Hungarian trade was even more strongly Western-oriented. Western investment had flowed most strongly into these three countries but also into Slovenia, Croatia and the Baltic states, and more hesitantly into the Balkans. Polish factories which had formed part of the Warsaw Pact’s military-industrial complex are now making sub-assemblies for Western aircraft firms; Skoda, transferred to German ownership, is becoming one of the most successful units within Volkswagen. Western tourists in large numbers have learned to enjoy the scenery (and the lower prices) of Prague, Budapest and Warsaw, or of skiing in the Tatras and the Carpathians. Smaller numbers from the region have moved across the West: students on scholarships, migrants working legally or ‘on the black’, families

¹⁹ Ulrich Sedelmeier and Helen Wallace, ‘Policies towards Central and Eastern Europe’, ch. 14 in Wallace and Wallace, *Policy-making in the European Union*, 3rd edn. 1996; Jan Zielonka, ‘Policies without strategy: the EU’s record in eastern Europe’, ch. 9 in Jan Zielonka (ed.), *Paradoxes of European Foreign Policy* (the Hague: Kluwer, 1998). See also Stuart Croft and others, *The Enlargement of Europe* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999).

²⁰ The government of Slovakia until after the 1998 elections provided one exception to this development, seeking accession but rejecting the political conditions attached. The government of Croatia maintained a similar position into 1999. Serbian Yugoslavia has of course provided a far sharper exception, resisting all Western conditions and pressures, and making no effort to seek access to Western institutions.

²¹ Karen Henderson (ed.), *Back to Europe: Central and Eastern Europe and the European Union* (London: UCL Press, 1999).

visiting those who fled or were displaced during and after the Second World War and who have now established themselves in the comfortable West to which their relations aspire.

On almost all measures this is, in the late 1990s, a relationship of highly asymmetrical interdependence: of Eastern dependence on the West, without significant Western dependence on the East. Poland accounts for 1 per cent of German external trade, for less than 1 per cent of EU external trade as a whole. The entire ex-socialist region, from Frankfurt an der Oder to Vladivostock, accounts for some 10 per cent of the EU's trade—with a classic asymmetrical trading pattern, oil and gas, other raw materials and semimanufactures flowing west, machinery and finished products flowing east. Central European economies have opened to Western investment, accepting that prized local companies become part of Western multinationals—even substantial parts of the Czech brewing industry—without gaining substantial stakes in Western economies in return. Experts travel east to advise, train and teach; would-be experts travel west to learn.

But where does Europe end?

Western Europe—or, the West, since for security issues through NATO the US is a central player in the reshaping of Europe—has responded to this opening up of the regions to the east with deep ambivalence. In the autumn of 1989, when the prospect presented itself of four central European states (these were then the German Democratic Republic, Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia) detaching themselves from the 'Eastern bloc' and attaching themselves to the West, enlargement of Western institutions through the reincorporation of historic central Europe appeared welcome and manageable. As other states further east and south-east followed, Western ambivalence grew. The Baltic states, with sponsors in the Nordic countries, historic ties with Germany and exile groups in Britain and North America, present a special case: small enough to incorporate without excessive cost, self-evidently in need of Western security provision. Slovenia, relatively prosperous, small, Catholic, closely linked to Austria, Italy and Germany, has also succeeded in presenting itself as returning to the West—in spite of an awkward dispute with the Berlusconi government in Italy over the restitution of Italian property from before the frontiers were redrawn half a century ago. Croatia, similarly Catholic, with a substantial diaspora in southern Germany and a long-established position as a holiday destination for West European tourists, has so far failed to establish a similar position: held back by its direct involvement in the conflicts of ex-Yugoslavia, by the authoritarian tendencies of its government, and by its treatment of its Serbian minority.

Those countries without direct frontiers with ex-Cold War Western Europe, geographically more distant, with less easily-exploitable cultural or human ties, have found it harder to gain or to hold the attention of Western institutions and governments. South-eastern Europe has presented a particular anomaly. It was economic crisis and political weakness in Greece and Turkey which led to the Marshall Plan of 1947; the geopolitics of Cold War Europe which crystallized in the years which followed attached Greece and Turkey to 'the West', as members of NATO and the

Council of Europe and as the first associates of the infant EEC. Post-Colonels' Greece succeeded, through skilful political advocacy, in overcoming the negative *Opinion* of the EC Commission and gaining full EC membership in 1981. Post-Generals' Turkey was less skilful, with a far weaker case: economically more backward, politically even less stable, with fewer emotional chords to strike with West European elites about claimed contributions to European history and civilization. Greece thus became a full member of both major Western institutions eight years before the opening up of socialist Europe began; while a discontented Turkey remained as a key Western ally, the home country for over two million of the EC's population, its application for EC membership resubmitted in 1987 and blocked not only by the Commission's negative assessment but also by determined Greek obstruction.

Geopoliticians need not be too concerned with defining exact boundaries within an international system marked by spheres of influence, heartlands and border regions. Institutionalization however requires hard decisions. States must either be accepted into full membership of regional institutions, or excluded, unless a mutually-acceptable form of association can be found. The electorates of Switzerland and Norway, secure in their prosperity and national identity, have chosen association with the EU rather than full membership.²² The Swiss, and Irish, Swedes, Finns and Austrians, have similarly chosen to remain outside NATO. Turkish political leaders on the other hand perceive their state as excluded from the EU, and bitterly resent the inferior status of association which is offered. Russian and Ukrainian leaders as fiercely resent the opening of NATO membership to Poland but not to them, and challenge the implicit assumption that the economic and political privileges of EU membership will extend across the lands between Germany and Ukraine but be denied to those beyond.

Enlargement raises difficult questions of institutional capacities as well as of regional international relations. Concerns that enlargement would undermine the decision-making capabilities of the European Community, as well as destroying its delicate internal balance, have preoccupied existing members and Brussels officials since enlargement began. Five years' experience of Greek intransigence, reinforced by Spanish and Portuguese accession, persuaded Margaret Thatcher and other heads of government to accept further moves away from unanimity to qualified majority voting in the 1986 Single European Act. Jacques Delors as President of the Commission sought in 1988–9 to define a form of closer association for the member states of the European Free Trade Area which would provide them with a satisfactory alternative to seeking full membership; but even before these negotiations were completed the Austrian government had decided that full membership was the only satisfactory outcome, with the Finnish, Swedish, Norwegian and Swiss governments also reconsidering their position.²³ Further enlargement, incorporating another 10–15 states into an institutional framework designed for six close neigh-

²² In both cases against the preferences of their governmental and economic elites, which sought the influence which follows from a seat at the table in multilateral policymaking, and feared the long-term political and economic costs of accepting the extra-territorial jurisdiction implied by association.

²³ Helen Wallace (ed.), *The Wider Western Europe: Reshaping the EC-EFTA Relationship* (London: Pinter, 1991); Anna Michalski and Helen Wallace, *The European Community: The Challenge of Enlargement* (London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1992).

bours, threatens—so some within the original members have argued—fatally to weaken the capabilities of the institution they clamour to join.

The narrower scope of NATO makes eastern enlargement in some ways less traumatic. Association, through Partnership for Peace, was offered not only to Russia and Ukraine but also to the trans-Caucasus and Central Asian successor states to the Soviet Union. But pressures from Poland, in particular, and from supporting lobbies within the US, pushed the Atlantic Alliance to move towards full enlargement: initially only to three states, but with others in south-eastern Europe and the Baltic pressing for similar access to NATO's consultative mechanisms and integrated military structures, and for similar security guarantees. NATO, like the EU, is thus now faced with the dilemma that half-promises of future membership raise expectations that will eventually have to be satisfied, while denial that membership may even be a long-term prospect is seen as discrimination, even exclusion.

Abolition of internal frontier controls within Western Europe further complicates the question of Europe's outer border. The principle on which the Schengen Agreement was based was that the lifting of internal controls would be accompanied by 'compensatory measures' at the common external frontier: raising, for critics of the evolution of European immigration and asylum policy, the prospect of a 'Fortress Europe' from which outsiders would be more and more rigorously excluded.²⁴ Pre-accession negotiations between the EU and east European applicant states have paid particular attention to border controls; the German government has made it a condition for the relaxation of controls on the Polish-German border that the Poles should tighten controls on their border with Ukraine. A sharp line is therefore being drawn between insiders and outsiders, between the privileged who may move around Europe's internal space and the unprivileged, queueing for visas and for entry, outside. The question of where 'Europe' stops is thus difficult to evade, or to answer in terms of peripheral regions and associated territories. Institutional membership or exclusion, freedom of movement or denial of entry, will clearly mark the outer boundaries of the emerging European order.

During the Cold War the question of Europe's extent and boundaries was easily resolved. The 'iron curtain' represented 'Europe's' effective eastern frontier; the nations and states behind it were remembered as 'captive', but accepted as excluded for the foreseeable long-term future. Article 237 of the Treaty of Rome (repeating the language of Article 98 of the 1951 Treaty of Paris) clearly stated that 'Any European State may apply to become a member of the Community'; but none of the drafters envisaged that the European Community might expand beyond the then-20 or so members of the Council of Europe.²⁵

In the post-1945 period the concepts of 'Europe' and of 'the West' had been elided; the European intellectual diaspora which settled in the United States in the 1930s and 1940s wrote and taught on 'Western civilization' and 'the Atlantic

²⁴ Malcolm Anderson, et al., *Policing the European Union* (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1995); *Visas and Control of External Borders of the Member States*, 14th Report of the House of Lords Select Committee on the European Communities, 1993–4 (London: HMSO, HL-78 1993–4).

²⁵ Jean Monnet's *Memoirs* (London: Cape, 1978) are unclear on how wide a Community he was prepared to envisage. François Duchene, in *Jean Monnet: the First Statesman of Interdependence* (New York: Norton, 1994), ch. 5, suggests that he did not care greatly about the number of smaller countries incorporated, provided that it was built around France and Germany and expanded to include Britain.

Community'. In the 1980s dissident intellectuals successfully reinvented the concept of 'Central Europe', cleverly defined as 'that region geographically in the centre of the Europe, which belongs spiritually to the West, which is under the political domination of the East'.²⁶ Gorbachev and the reforming Russians around him were meanwhile talking about 'our common European home', a region which for them should include Russia but might well in the long-term exclude North America. The continuing framework of the Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe, which had grown out of the Helsinki Conference of 1972–4, defined its wider 'Europe' as from Vancouver to Vladivostock.

This mental reconstruction of Europe, of competing claims to geographical inclusion, cultural and historical affinity, to be credited in economic access and aid and in security provision, remains an area of continuing contention and confusion. One West European reaction to the lengthening queue of applicants to Western institutions was to float the competing concept of 'core Europe': the rich and densely-populated states around the Rhine valley and delta, the Rhone, the routes across the Alps and the north-western Mediterranean around which European prosperity, high culture and high politics has revolved since the establishment of Charlemagne's Western empire. Its French and German proponents pictured a multi-tier structure for this wider Europe, a western core with an eastern periphery extending outwards through second-tier membership of Western institutions to external associates. Western policymakers have been preoccupied with consolidating their own achievement of regional integration, potentially threatened by enlargement to incorporate a succession of smaller, politically and economically weaker states.

The re-emergence of central and eastern Europe, rolling east and south-east into Asia, have forced Western policymakers to rethink their mental maps, to return to the old question of 'Where does Europe end?', most of all to the dilemmas posed by the semi-European states of Russia and Turkey. Russia is too important to exclude, too large to include; neither NATO nor the EU, neither the US nor Germany, have yet defined a coherent strategy in the face of incoherent Russian political and economic circumstances. Responses to all South-Eastern European states have been coloured by the breakdown of Yugoslavia; 'the Balkans' provide a familiar image from European history of murderous conflicts and chronic instability. Greece's position as a full member of Western institutions, its frontiers touching Bulgaria, Albania, and former-Yugoslav Macedonia, as well as Turkey, has made Western responses more difficult. It rules out any attempt to draw the boundaries of institutionalized Europe along the old fault line between Western and Eastern Christendom, as many (in Germany particularly) would have preferred.

One of the strongest indicators of the incoherence of Western responses to the reshaping of Europe was the acceptance by the EU of Cyprus and Malta as priority candidates for accession, at the Corfu European Council in 1994: a late-night decision, pressed on tired foreign ministers by the Greek Presidency and accepted by Heads of Government into the Council Communiqué. The Cyprus dispute has become a central issue in Greek–Turkish relations, with Turkish troops and Turkish

²⁶ The successful efforts of these dissident intellectuals to influence opinion in Western Europe is described in Tim Garton Ash, *The Uses of Adversity* (Cambridge: Granta, 1989). For an early Western attempt to reopen this geopolitical question, see Hugh Seton-Watson, 'What is Europe, where is Europe?' *Encounter*, (July–August 1985), pp. 9–17.

subsidies supporting the otherwise-unrecognized 'Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus'. Cyprus itself is further south than Tunis, further east than Moldova and Belarus, its east coast 200 km from Lebanon, its prosperity as a financial centre intimately entwined with Russia and the Middle East. Cypriot entry to the EU will not prove possible without a resolution of its divided status, without also a resolution of the question of Turkey's future association or membership with the EU. American perceptions of Turkey as a key ally, and of the EU as a subordinate part of the US-led Western community, have led to repeated support from Administration officials for its EU application, thus exposing divisions between these two Western institutions. The parallel priority accorded to mini-state Malta also raises the uncomfortable prospect of granting a seat at the Council table to a second Luxembourg, a small state with domestic politics much more idiosyncratic than those of Luxembourg, its 371,000 population equivalent to that of a small Italian or German city.

Then there is Europe's near South, across the Mediterranean, historically more often a highway linking its littoral states than a border between Europe and non-Europe. Ninth century Moors extended their reach northwards across Spain into France, as well as into Sicily; nineteenth century France, Spain and Italy extended their reach southwards across North Africa. Present-day Algeria, as part of France, was formally included within the EEC when the Treaty of Rome was signed; though the French Government failed to persuade its American ally that the war of independence then underway came within the framework of the Atlantic Treaty. Population explosions, social and economic disruption across North Africa have brought several million Moroccans, Algerians, Tunisians, Mauritians within the boundaries of the EU; thousands of others struggle each month to follow them, across the narrow straits of Gibraltar and Sicily. All of the states around the southern Mediterranean depend economically on the EU, as asymmetrically as the EU's eastern neighbours; but none are ever likely to be accepted as candidates for membership.²⁷

One of the responses of the EU's southern members to the reorientation of their northern partners eastwards was to launch new initiatives for Mediterranean partnership. The Euro-Mediterranean Conference in Barcelona in November 1995, an initiative of the Spanish EU Presidency, brought the 15 EU members together with 12 'Mediterranean partners' (including Jordan, the Palestinian Authority and Israel, but not Libya) to agree on a 'comprehensive Euro-Mediterranean Partnership . . . through strengthened political dialogue on a regular basis, the development of economic and financial cooperation and greater emphasis on the social, cultural and human dimension.'²⁸ Substantial financial transfers from EU funds were promised, estimated at two-thirds of those committed to central and eastern Europe; though

²⁷ The Moroccan government addressed a letter of enquiry about future membership to the EC Commission in 1987, which referred to the contribution which Morocco had made to European civilization—treating contemporary Morocco as the successor state to the Moorish kingdom of Spain. So far as I am aware, it did not receive a formal answer. On Morocco's application, see George Joffe (ed.), *Morocco and Europe*, Centre for Near and Middle East Studies, SOAS, London, 1989; and A. Bahaijoub, 'Morocco's Argument to join the EC', in George Joffe (ed.), *North Africa: Nation, State and Region* (London: Routledge, 1993), pp. 235–46.

²⁸ Final Declaration, Euro-Mediterranean Conference, Barcelona, 29/11/1995. See also Ricardo Gomez, 'The EU's Mediterranean Policy: Common Foreign Policy by the Back Door?', ch. 8 in John Peterson and Helene Sjursen (eds.), *A Common Foreign Policy for Europe?* (London: Routledge, 1998).

political difficulties, problems of absorption by weak state administrations, have limited distribution since then. American determination to retain control over Israeli-Palestinian negotiations, while depending on the EU and its member states to provide the greater part of international assistance to the Palestinian Authority, has blighted the proposed political dialogue; intractable internal conflict within Algeria has blocked it further. But this intense dependent relationship remains, exerting a counterpull to eastern enlargement and a constant reminder that Europe's southern border is as difficult to define as its eastern.²⁹

One of the central ambiguities within the Atlantic alliance, now as in the 1950s, is the extent of its shared responsibilities in the Mediterranean. American deployment of troops to Europe, for logical operational reasons, has shifted since 1989 from the central front to the south; the Sixth Fleet more than any other military force assures the security of the Mediterranean, and projects American power across the Middle East. Loose and overlapping concepts like 'Eurasia', 'Euro-Mediterranean', 'the eastern Mediterranean', 'the Near East' and 'the Greater Middle East' encapsulate loose thinking over shared responsibilities and policy preferences. The southern borders of Europe, the southern extension of its developing institutions and their dependent associates, are likely to be as troublesome a source of confusion and disagreement among Western governments as the eastern.

What structures for European order are now emerging?

It is at least clear that the politics and structure of post-Cold War politics within the European region will not, as John Mearsheimer predicted, resemble those of pre-1939 Europe.³⁰ There are of course some evident similarities. Poland is again emerging as an important—and difficult—state: the key player among the accepted EU applicants, with 40 million of the 100 million population of all 11 central and east European associates, with by far the largest agricultural sector, with a political class less willing to swallow all the conditions the EU wishes to set than its counterparts in the Czech Republic and Hungary.³¹ Russia and Turkey again present problems at the periphery; South-Eastern Europe (the Balkans) has returned as a preoccupation. But the balance of power is not returning as the guiding principle of this new European order—unless pursued subtly through the multiple negotiations and coalitions of institutionalized European policymaking. German political leaders have been careful to place their approach to their eastern neighbours within this established multilateral framework. Hungarian political leaders have worked to prevent ethnic disputes overflowing into interstate conflict—successfully in relations with Romania, less successfully in relations with Slovakia and Yugoslavia/Serbia. Only in the former Yugoslavia have old patterns of pre-1945 conflicts re-emerged. The greatest failure of both NATO and the EU in managing the transition from

²⁹ Esther Barbé, 'Balancing Europe's Eastern and Southern Dimensions', ch. 8 in Zielonka (ed.), *Paradoxes of European Foreign Policy*.

³⁰ John J. Mearsheimer, 'Back to the Future: Instability in Europe after the Cold War', *International Security*, Summer 1990, 5–56.

³¹ Clare McManus, 'Poland and the Europe Agreements: the EU as a Regional Actor', ch. 7 in Peterson and Sjursen, *A Common Foreign Policy for Europe?*

Cold War order to post-Cold War order has been their uncertain approach to the successive conflicts in eastern Croatia, Bosnia and Kosovo.

To some extent what we are witnessing within the European region—or at least within Western Europe—resembles the ‘new medieval’ model of a European society set out by Hedley Bull, in which authority, loyalty and identity are diffused away from the monolithic structure of the sovereign state to supra- and sub-state entities, within a shared framework of values and rules.³² It is clear that this emerging European order will be ‘institution-rich’, interacting through political rather than military conflict, through diffuse political differences rather than direct interstate rivalries. Cross-border interaction between nongovernmental organizations, politicians, journalists, officials and ministers has substantially eroded the classical distinction between the domestic and the international. Regional European politics is characterized by intense transgovernmental transactions, in which substate entities as well as national administrations play an active part.³³

It is also clear that within this emerging order states will continue to play an important, though not exclusive, role. State administrations will manage the complex mechanisms of multilateral negotiation and multi-level governance; state institutions will continue to provide the framework for political recruitment, political debate, representation and accountability. Even for Europe’s largest states, however, sovereignty in the full nineteenth century sense has long since disappeared. Community law runs throughout the EU, implemented as fully as federal law within the United States and extended extraterritorially across the EU’s associates.³⁴ Governments take collective decisions, often by unanimity but increasingly often by qualified majority vote; the link between governmental responsibility for foreign policy and accountability to national parliaments for those decisions has thus been broken, as ministers explain to parliaments that they have done their best to represent national interests but have been outvoted. The Brussels institutions—the European Commission, the EU Council Secretariat, the NATO and WEU Secretariats, the European Parliament—have limited autonomous influence and an ambivalent image, but nevertheless play a significant part in this new level of politics and policymaking. The commitment in the 1997 Treaty of Amsterdam to upgrade the post of EU Council Secretary-general to include the function of a ‘High Representative for the common foreign and security policy’, and the appointment to that post in 1999 of Javier Solana (former Spanish foreign minister, and Secretary-general of NATO) mark a further step in the transfer of influence from separate national capitals to shared institutions.³⁵

The proliferation of small and weak states across central and eastern Europe represents one of the most intractable problems in expanding Western institutional

³² Hedley Bull, *The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics* (London: Macmillan, 1977), pp. 254–5. Fred Halliday, in *Rethinking International Relations* (London: Macmillan, 1994), ch. 5, traces this interpretation of European international society back to Edmund Burke.

³³ Helen Wallace, ‘The Pattern of Policy’, ch. 1 in Wallace and Wallace, *Policymaking in the European Union*, 4th edn.

³⁴ This is not to imply that it is implemented without question in every member state; but US federal law is not implemented unquestionably throughout every state within the USA. It is only 40 years since the National Guard had to be mobilized in southern states to enforce the supremacy of federal law over state legislation. What is most remarkable is that Community law is so widely accepted by national courts and administrations, without any comparable sanctions.

³⁵ Article 26, Treaty of European Union, as revised in the Treaty of Amsterdam 1997.

structures east and south-east, and in maintaining a balance between sovereign equality and effective multilateral policymaking. European institutions face the challenge of a widening imbalance between strong and weak states, between large and small, prosperous and poor: of state-units claiming sovereignty, and representation in regional institutions on that basis, without resources in terms of population, economic development, military forces, even administrative capabilities, to support that claim.³⁶ The combined population of eleven of the twelve states whose applications the EU is currently considering (leaving aside Poland) is smaller than that of Germany; their combined GDPs are smaller than that of the Netherlands. The prospect of an enlargement process which could take NATO and EU membership to more than 30 member states, the majority of which are poorer and less populated than North-Rhine/Westphalia, strains the distinction between sovereign and non-sovereign entities to the limit. Hence the rumbling discussion within the EU over changing voting weights and representation between large and small members; though this has not yet surfaced within the 'consensual', effectively American-led, NATO.³⁷

How far is it likely that European institutions themselves will become the dominant level of governance, rather than the vehicles through which national actors, representing diffuse but still recognizable state interests, pursue advantage? That, I suggest, depends above all on the future relationship between NATO and the EU: on whether issues of force, power, violence, remain predominantly matters dealt with through a hegemonic American power, or whether civilian European institutions are forced to develop capabilities for hard security and power projection. Political transactions *within* Europe have developed the quality we now observe because politico-military relations between Western Europe and other states—Russia, the Middle East—have been handled primarily by the United States, and because relations between West European governments and the United States have themselves been managed within a framework of multilateral institutions and shared values. Civilian-power Europe has been able to develop its semi-sovereign, semi-medieval patterns of intense transgovernmental politics because questions of force and of external threats have been left to the Atlantic alliance, countered predominantly by American power and American defence expenditure.

The relationship between NATO and the EU, between the United States and its European allies, remains one of the least well-explored questions about Europe in the 21st century, in spite of a wealth of academic and policy studies. Europe without the United States is more likely to move towards a more explicit federation, necessarily with a larger common budget and a stronger federal policymaking structure. Europe with the United States will be able to avoid grappling with these hard choices, managing intensive regional governance through further development

³⁶ This is not entirely a new phenomenon. Franz Lehar's opera, *The Merry Widow*, was after all a skit on the pretensions of Montenegro to independent statehood; the plot revolves around a leading bankers' widow being left a large proportion of the state's domestic capital.

³⁷ This threatened to be a major issue in the 1996–7 EU Intergovernmental Conference (IGC), with the German and French governments expressing concern that with the current weighting of votes favouring smaller countries it would be possible after further enlargement for a qualified majority of votes to carry a decision against states representing the majority of EU citizens. The confused endgame negotiations at Amsterdam, in June 1997, however agreed to postpone this issue until a further IGC. Brendan Smith, *Politics and Policymaking at the 1996–7 European Union Intergovernmental Conference* (London: LSE Ph.D thesis, 1999), ch. 5.

of the multilateral institutions it has already established.³⁸ So long as the United States continues to relieve European governments and institutions—through its leadership of NATO, and the maintenance of NATO as itself a European institution—of the necessity of confronting the hard questions of high politics and military power, of maintaining regional order and preparing to meet external threats, then the EU itself can remain a civilian power, a focus for intergovernmental bargaining and a vehicle through which national governments concert their policies. If US and West European interests were however explicitly to diverge, if the mood of American politics were to shift towards political and military withdrawal or to posing demands for burden-sharing and subordination to American global leadership which European political leaders found too oppressive, then the institutional structure of post-Cold War Europe will have to be built upon a much firmer, single-centred foundation.

The complexity of the choices involved, the unwillingness either of American or of West European policymakers to confront them, explains the deliberate indirection with which the wider European order has so far been negotiated. Disjointed incrementalism is the policy style of practical men, who recognize that the great questions of politics are often best avoided for as long as possible. Neither the EU nor the Atlantic alliance have adopted a strategic view of enlargement. The EU has shuffled from European Council to European Council, spelling out a 'Pre-accession Strategy' in 1994 to prepare the applicant states for future membership while postponing negotiation on how the EU itself might adjust to enlargement, and saying nothing about a timescale for entry. After the Amsterdam Treaty had been agreed the Commission in July 1997 published, in successive volumes of its *Agenda 2000* report, its proposals on the necessary adaptation of the existing EU to enlargement and its opinions on each applicant state's readiness for membership. Negotiations on entry for the first six candidates got under way in early 1998, with a minimum timetable for completion, ratification and entry estimated at 2003–2005, and divergent views on how rapidly others might follow on behind.³⁹ The EU has thus approached the incorporation of eastern Europe reluctantly and indirectly, so far avoiding the question of where it may draw the definitive border in 10–20 years' time.

Two reformulations of NATO's 'strategic concept', in 1991 and 1999, and a NATO 'Study on Enlargement' in 1995 have left the alliance still confused about how many further members it should accept, unhealthily dependent on shifting moods within the US Administration and Congress. The 1995 NATO 'Study of Enlargement' set out the prospect of a European institutional order built around the twin pillars of NATO and EU, concluding that 'ideally, in the long run, the memberships of NATO and the EU should coincide.'⁴⁰ In the process of transformation and enlargement, however, NATO and the EU have diverged. The conditions attached to

³⁸ For contrasting views on the post-Cold War development of transatlantic relations, see Christopher Coker, *The Twilight of the West* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1998), and John Peterson, *Europe and America: The Prospects for Partnership* (London: Routledge, 2nd edn 1996); or *The Future of Transatlantic Relations*, Task Force report (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 1998), and William Wallace and Jan Zielonka, 'Misunderstanding Europe', *Foreign Affairs*, 77:6 (1998), pp. 65–79.

³⁹ This process is detailed in Alan Mayhew, *Recreating Europe: the EU's Policy towards Central and Eastern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

⁴⁰ 'Study on NATO Enlargement', *NATO Secretariat*, Brussels, September 1995.

NATO accession were progressively reduced, the cost estimates sharply lowered; allowing the three candidates accepted in the first round to enter on a timetable which fitted the desire of NATO's leading member to celebrate appropriately the 50th anniversary of the signing of the Atlantic Treaty, in April 1999.

NATO is thus enlarging much more rapidly than the EU, but with a much less clear sense of what the implications of enlargement may be for the alliance. The assumption remains, at least in public, that NATO will remain essentially unchanged by enlargement; though change is evidently underway, most visibly in the crowd of 'Partners' who assemble on the edges of NATO meetings and in the formal meetings of the NATO-Russia and NATO-Ukraine Joint Councils. Disjointed incrementalism is the preferred approach; NATO has, its defenders claim, adapted successfully to changes in its strategic tasks and environment since 1989, maintaining alliance solidarity during the ex-Yugoslav conflict and learning from the complex requirements of that conflict. Further incremental adjustment may continue to serve its purposes sufficiently well. Academic analysts may argue that the European-American relationship needs to be reshaped and strengthened into an Atlantic Union, lest it drift into disgruntled confrontation.⁴¹ Policymakers are content that it has so far adjusted to a reduction of American forces in Europe to a third of their strength in 1989, and has managed disagreements over policy towards the Middle East, Turkey and Central Asia without public confrontation.

The unanswered questions of European foreign policy thus interrelate. The United States is a key player in European relations with its defining semi-European neighbours—Turkey, Ukraine, Russia—and in relations with its Arab and Muslim Mediterranean neighbours. The management of enlargement of both the EU and NATO, the evolution of mutually satisfactory associations with those on the European periphery which do not come in, depend upon the maintenance of an active, mutually confident relationship between European governments and Washington. Perceptions from Washington, of Turkey as a strategic ally in the 'Greater Middle East' which should be rewarded with early membership of the EU (as US officials have repeatedly declared), of Russia as a Pacific as well as a European power, of politics in the Middle East, differ significantly from perceptions in the major European capitals. But provided that European political leaders can continue successfully to avoid confrontation with Washington, and can rehearse the rhetoric of transatlantic solidarity even while practising the pursuit of European interests, then hard choices about European defence and foreign policy may not be necessary.⁴²

In the absence of an overall strategy, the experiences of Bosnia and Kosovo have done much to shape government assumptions, at least in the short-term. The impact of Kosovo in 1998–9 may prove significant in pushing reluctant governments forward; unless second thoughts and domestic distractions lead governments to drift away from the commitments they made in the heat of the conflict. The British and French governments, shaken by the weakness of European military capabilities in an emergency, and by American unilateralism in negotiations with President Milosevic

⁴¹ Charles Kupchan, 'From European Union to Atlantic Union', ch. 10 in Zielonka (ed.), *Paradoxes of European Foreign Policy*.

⁴² Jan Zielonka, *Explaining Euro-paralysis: Why Europe is Unable to Act in International Politics* (London: Macmillan, 1998).

as the crisis developed, launched at St. Malo in December 1998 a defence initiative intended to merge WEU into the EU, to raise through closer integration and specialization European defence capabilities, and so to contribute to greater European autonomy within the Atlantic alliance. Leading Western governments held out half-promises to the states of south-eastern Europe—including Albania and Macedonia—of eventual membership both of the EU and of NATO, as well as of a generous programme of economic assistance for post-conflict reconstruction in the region. That in turn should give greater urgency to completion of the first round of EU enlargement, placing the negotiations within a strategic framework which EU member governments had until then preferred to ignore.

Tracing the direction in which West European governments and the US are drifting, it is possible to discern the outlines of a future European regional order. Without fully appreciating the implications of commitments half-made, West European governments have now pledged themselves to extend the reach of European institutions across all the states between Germany and Ukraine, and between Austria and Greece. Merger of WEU and EU in the proposed Intergovernmental Conference of 2000 would create a framework for extending security across that region in parallel; leaving for transatlantic negotiation the question of whether NATO should expand to include these new EU entrants, or should halt enlargement in order not to bring the boundaries of the Western alliance to the borders of Russia, or alternatively should aim to expand beyond to bring both Ukraine and Russia within a military framework with which both are now formally associated.

Many within the West European governments would be happy to move towards a regional order within which both Russia and Turkey were full members of the security framework, but neither full members of its politico-economic framework. The importance of Turkey and Russia to European stability, the overlap of Russian and Turkish minorities into institutionalized Europe, leave the question of how to accommodate these two states as in many ways the most difficult issue to face in constructing a stable post-Cold War European order. Governments will therefore attempt to postpone hard decisions, hoping that crises—over Russian minorities in Baltic states, over Cypriot entry into the EU—will not force them to choose one option or the other. The idea that institutionalized Europe's hard outer border should be drawn across Cyprus, or that the border between Estonia and Russia (or between eastern Poland and western Ukraine) should mark the dividing line between the rich West and the excluded east is not one that Western ministers want to accept, even though these are the borders towards which current policy is drifting.

The integration of Europe has been managed by elites, with mass publics enjoying the benefits that integration brings without always supporting the challenges to national identity which they also pose. Shared values, geographical propinquity, and increases in cross-border movement, have provided sufficient sense of political community to support the gradual emergence of a new level of government, managed multilaterally by representatives of national governments alongside supranational institutions. The extension of integrated institutions and patterns of multilateral policymaking across a further 100 million people in another dozen states will stretch this sense of shared community—the necessary foundation for a post-sovereign regional system—to the limit. Larger financial transfers from west to east, shifts in industrial production, will provide ample opportunity for populist politicians in the west to protest against the conspiracy of elites which manages the

consociational politics of institutionalized Europe.⁴³ Yet the passage of time, and the provision of growing prosperity, have carried western Europe's reluctant voters much further than they expected or wished over the past forty years; barring economic depression or external military crisis, it may well be that they will continue to follow reluctantly the path quietly set by their leaders.

What is emerging, therefore, is a post-sovereign regional system. But it is one which depends crucially on the provision of security from the outside, on being able to focus on striking internal bargains without confronting external demands. It remains to be seen whether the United States will be willing to continue to provide external security far into the twenty-first century, or whether European governments will be content to accept its provision on American terms. To this extent the Realists are right: politico-military questions are ultimately controlling. What West European governments and societies have demonstrated is that once the problem of mutual insecurity is resolved, it is possible to move away from state-to-state international politics through the development of multilateral institutions and the dismantling of frontier controls. The hardest test for supporters of civilian power, multilevel governance, and international civil society will not be whether Western Europe can succeed in extending its established patterns of interaction across the east European applicants—though that is hard enough. It will be whether this emerging post-sovereign Europe can extend stability, prosperity and mutual trust further, across its dependent periphery, with or without the cooperation of the United States.

⁴³ Paul Taylor, *The European Union in the 1990s* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), ch. 2.