THE SIGNING OF THE NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY:
A CASE FOR MULTILATERALISM

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ABSTRACT

This article demonstrates the adoption of a multilateral mindset by great powers in the aftermath of the Second World War. It argues that after 1945 the United States, Britain, France, and Canada started to cooperate on security issues based on the basic principles of multilateralism. They came to believe that security is an indivisible issue and that cooperation in security issues should be based on reciprocal obligations in such a way of not to discriminate against any participant. Moreover, they believed this cooperation should target a long-term relationship illuminated by mutual understanding rather than quid-pro-quo driven by short-term national interests.

Keywords: International organization, international security, multilateralism, the North Atlantic Treaty, NATO.

ÖZET

Bu makale, büyük güçlerin İkinci Dünya Savaşı sonrası diplomaside spesifik bir yaklaşım olan çoktarafılığı kabul etmeleri ve bu yaklaşım etrafında işbirliğine gitmelerini konu edinmektedir. Güvenlik konusunun bölünmezliğini, yani bir gücü etkileyen bir güvenlik sorununun diğer güçleri de etkileyeceği ve ekonomik, sosyal, siyasal konular ile güvenlik ve savunma konularının birbiriyile bağlantılı olduğunu benimseyen ABD, İngiltere, Fransa ve Kanada, çoktarafılık yaklaşımının ilkelerini temel alarak, güvenlik konularında ayrımcılık geldiğinden karşılıklı sorumluluk esas etrafında işbirliğine gittişlerdir. Bu işbirliğinin uzun süreli olmasını hedefleyen devletler, kısa vadeli ulusal çıkarların gerektirdiği ödünleri almaya çalışmaktan ziyade, çoktarafılık yaklaşımının gereği olarak karşılıklı anlayışı yerleştirip koruyarak bölgesel ve küresel.barışa katkıda bulunmuşlardır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Uluslararası örgütlenme, uluslararası güvenlik, çoktarafılık, Kuzey Atlantik Antlaşması, NATO.

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INTRODUCTION

As the members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization are celebrating the fifty-fifth anniversary of the organization, it is of great importance to look at the signing of the North Atlantic Treaty in order to acknowledge the importance of the multilateral approach to international affairs and institutionalized cooperation among democracies.

The concept of multilateralism in the study of international relations is used as opposed to both unilateral and bilateral approaches. Robert Keohane has defined multilateralism as "the practice of co-ordinating national policies in groups of three or more states" (Keohane, 1990: 731). However, John Gerard Ruggie, who has been the most influential scholar in developing the theory, has argued against Keohane's definition. Ruggie asserts that with regard to multilateralism, "the issue is not the number of parties so much as it is the kind of relations that are instituted among them." For Ruggie "it is this substantive or qualitative characteristic of multilateralism" that differentiates it from other approaches to international institutions (Ruggie, 1992: 566). "At its core," he argues, "multilateralism refers to coordinating relations among three or more states in accordance with certain principles" (Ruggie, 1992: 568).

Ruggie provides three basic principles: (1) indivisibility, (2) nondiscrimination, or generalized organizing principles, and (3) diffuse reciprocity.

Indivisibility is illustrated by collective security arrangements wherein an attack on one is considered an attack on all. Nondiscrimination implies that all parties be treated similarly, as in the use of most-favored nation (MFN) status in trade agreements. Diffuse reciprocity implies that states do not rely on specific, quid-pro-quo exchanges, but on longer term assurances of balance in their relations (Martin, 1992: 767).

As it will be demonstrated below, the Western powers adopted such a multilateral approach to international security issues after the Second World War. The need of a multilateral approach was first adopted by some statesmen occupying critical positions in democratic nations. They not only pressed their respective governments to change the traditional foreign policy principles but also urged other like-minded states to cooperate in security issues within an institutionalized framework. Ultimately, the U.S., Britain, France, and Canada transformed their foreign policies in the process leading up to the signing of the Treaty. The U.S. discarded its isolationism; Britain came to believe in the necessity of others than the English-speaking nations in collective...
defense arrangements and actively engaging in European politics; France changed its perception of the German power and consented to German recovery; and Canada became willing to pursue an independent and more active foreign policy.

The process leading up to the signing of the Treaty reflected the multilateral principles. The democratic powers followed neither unilateral policies that would keep the national-interest argument as a taboo in international security, nor tried to construct an alliance system in Europe a la Bismarck, nor did they think it rational or effective any longer to set up another “Concert of Europe.” Rather they came together around certain liberal principles in their effort to create and keep stability in Europe in particular and around the world in general. The most basic principle in conducting their relations was the belief that free and democratic nations should work together in deterring threats and defeating aggression. They also came to believe that the insecurity and poverty of a democratic nation does not mean the security of other like-minded states. Moreover, the Western nations acknowledged the idea that they should solve their political differences through peaceful means. Toward this end, they believed in the necessity of cooperating within an institutionalized framework rather than employing unilateral or bilateral security arrangements. Security among democracies, then, came to be an indivisible issue after the War.

The Western powers also treated one another as equal partners and discriminated against neither any participant nor other democratic nations. As a result, the pact adopted the rule of unanimity in decision-making; it did not specify any nation as a threat to the free world; and it decided to keep its doors open to future democratic accessions. Moreover, the Western powers had a positive approach and did not want to cross one another, so that long-term relationships based on mutual understanding could be possible. They had a broader vision in mind than only defeating Soviet aggression and controlling the Germans. Although during the negotiations they had different views on issues such as supranationalism, definition of the North Atlantic area as well as the membership criteria, they managed to solve their differences. It was clear that they were not basically exchanging quid pro quos. In other words, in the aftermath of the War the democratic nations followed the principle of diffuse reciprocity in their relations.

This article will elaborate these points in three sections. The first section summarizes the Soviet Union’s intentions in the aftermath of the War; the second section reviews the changes in the foreign policies of the United States, Britain, France, and Canada; and the final section looks at the negotiation phase of the North Atlantic Treaty.
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THE SOVIET UNION: THE COMMON THREAT

The United Nations Charter was signed in San Francisco on 26 June 1945 with the hope that all members would "refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state" ("Charter of the UN", 1987: 4). The Soviets were far from willing to follow this principle. Instead, they started the policy of exporting their ideology, through which they hoped to break the resistance of the newly-liberated European countries and to control East European states without resorting to force. Creating a system consistent with the ideology of its choice would make the Soviet Union the undisputed world leader. In fact the Soviets announced that "armed conflict remained an inherent part of the western system and that future wars could be expected" (Ireland, 1981: 19).

Besides trying to create satellite states in Central and Eastern Europe, the Soviets wanted to extend their control into the Mediterranean. With a note delivered to Turkey on 7 August 1946, they claimed territorial rights on the northeastern region, specifically on Kars and Ardahan. Moreover, the Soviets insisted on the revision of the Montreux Convention that had been regulating passage through the Turkish straits of the Bosphorus and Dardanelles since 1936. Moscow demanded the free passage of warships belonging to the Black Sea powers in times of both peace and war. This change in the Straits regime would of course have deprived Turkey of its right to close the Straits whenever it felt threatened. Moscow also proposed creating a "joint means of defense" in order to deter any attack on the Straits. These Soviet proposals, which would have terminated the international status of the Straits, were rejected by both Ankara and Washington (Vali, 1972: 69-73).

The North Atlantic Treaty was mainly signed to stop this Soviet expansionism in Europe. Although the German question became the other component of the problem definition by the signatories, it was basically the Soviet threat that provoked them to adopt a multilateral approach to international security issues and sign a formal pact. As Escott Reid, one of the creators of the Treaty, concluded:

The North Atlantic Treaty was the child of fear and hope. The main fear was that unless the North Atlantic countries united to defend themselves, the Soviet Union would, by all methods short of overt armed attack, steadily expand its power over Western Europe. The hope was that an alliance of the North Atlantic countries would deter the Soviet government from pursuing expansionist policies (Reid, 1977: 253).
TRANSFORMATION OF FOREIGN POLICIES

Under these Soviet demands, the Western powers had to revise their approach to international politics in general and to formulating their foreign policies in particular. Although the United States, as a major military, economic, and financial power, shaped the final version of the Treaty, a “North Atlantic” solution to the security problems in the post-war era could in fact not have been found without the active role of Britain, France, and Canada.

The adoption of a multilateral approach to international security issues and the transformation of foreign policies in the aftermath of the War were made possible by some statesmen occupying critical positions, especially at foreign offices, in their respective countries. The U.S. President Harry S. Truman, the U.S. Secretary of State George Marshall, Winston Churchill of Britain, and General Charles de Gaulle of France were all influential figures in the post-war security arrangements. However, the following statesmen deserve more credit than others for the signing of the North Atlantic Treaty: British Foreign Minister Ernest Bevin and Gladwyn Jebb, then Under-Secretary at the Foreign Office; the U.S. Under-Secretary Robert A. Lovett; John D. Hickerson, Director of the Office of European Affairs at the State Department; Senator Arthur Vandenberg; Canadian Foreign Minister (Prime Minister beginning from November 1948) Louis S. St. Laurent; and Lester B. Pearson, the successor of St. Laurent as Foreign Minister (Reid, 1977: 62-69).

These statesmen may be considered the founding fathers of the North Atlantic Treaty. As one scholar summarized:

Gladwyn Jebb produced and sold to Ernest Bevin the original idea, the spark, which resulted first in the conclusion of the Brussels Treaty and then of the North Atlantic Treaty. Hickerson sold the idea of a North Atlantic Treaty to Marshall and Lovett. Pearson sold the idea to MacKenzie King [the Canadian prime minister preceding St. Laurent] and St. Laurent (Reid, 1977: 68).

Leadership, then, can play a critical role in the adoption of multilateral solutions to international security issues. One of the earliest scholars who appreciated this role has been Inis L. Claude, Jr. In fact, it may be argued that Claude acknowledged the normative difference between multilateralism and other approaches to international politics long before Ruggie has formulated the theory. In his 1958 essay, in which he deals with the United Nations as a forum for multilateral diplomacy, Claude writes as follows: “What is multilateral diplomacy? Is it simply diplomacy with a larger cast of characters? I think not” (Claude, 1958: 43-44). Given that the Soviet and East European diplomats had made it difficult for the U.N. to work effectively, the world at the time was suffering from “a qualitative deficiency of politics in international
relations.” According to Claude, persons with a capacity for international leadership would make a difference in world politics. Claude had in mind names such as Lester B. Pearson for the “evidence of international statesmanship among governmental leaders,” and the major task of international leadership for Claude was “the provision of independent initiative, reflecting concern for the general welfare of mankind, in the formulation of international programs and policies” (Claude, 1958: 50-51).

The statesmen whose names given above had a vision broad enough to take independent initiatives in their respective countries and formulate a multilateral approach to international security issues in the aftermath of the War. Change in national foreign policies of the United States, Britain, France, and Canada were made possible by these statesmen, who agreed on the necessity of collective action in deterring Soviet aggression and eliminating the insecurity between democratic nations. They not only liked the idea of a collective defense arrangement, but also worked hard to see institutionalized cooperation between the Western powers in security issues. Moreover, they believed this cooperation had to be based on democratic values. Together they constituted an informed community of international leaders, for they shared “a commitment to a common causal model and a common set of political values. They [were] united by a belief in the truth of their model and by a commitment to translate this truth into public policy” (Haas, 1990: 41).

The United States

The United States had traditionally pursued an isolationist policy. What underlined this tradition was “George Washington’s Farewell Address dictum against entanglement in permanent alliances and James Monroe’s doctrine of the mutual exclusiveness of European and western hemispheric political affairs” (Ireland, 1981: 3). Even in the aftermath of the Second World War, the critical question for the Americans was how to “bring the boys back home.” In other words, the U.S. first tried to find solutions to the security problems through its traditional policy. However, as the Cold War unfolded it revised its approach under the light of the new knowledge introduced by a few statesmen, especially by Lovett and Hickerson.

In fact, one of the earliest reactions to the Soviet intentions had come from George F. Kennan. Writing from Moscow as Charge D’affaires, Kennan called attention to the autocratic political system of the Soviet Union and the signs of the Soviets expanding their sphere of interest (Cook, 1989: 54-64). He urged U.S. officials not to be optimistic about the future behavior of the Soviets. Kennan could hardly be more direct in his so-called Long Telegram: “You can’t do business with the Kremlin” (Ireland, 1981: 19).
The Soviet demands, coupled with the Soviet influence in the Greek civil war, and the British decision to cease the aid given to Turkey and Greece, resulted in the “Truman Doctrine.” The President, in his Congressional address on 12 March 1947, expressed his concern over both the division of the world into two hostile camps and the waning of freedom in Europe. He concluded that under the given circumstances “it must be the policy of the United States of America to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities, or by outside pressure” (“NATO: Facts and Figures”, 1989: 8).

Whereas the Truman Doctrine gave explicit political guarantees to Turkey and Greece, the European Recovery Program (ERP), which was initiated by Secretary of State George Marshall, targeted the European states’ economic recovery. The Plan proposed an institutionalized cooperation on economic issues that would lead to the creation of the Organization for European Economic Cooperation (OEEC). These two initiatives, the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan, heralded a major departure from the long-established American foreign policy approach, that is, isolationism or nonintervention in European politics.

The Soviets not only rejected the Marshall aid but also founded an organization, the Cominform, in September 1947, in order to invoke an ideological unity in the Soviet bloc. In late 1947, the world was split into two ideological camps. As this split became clear, U.S. leaders and public opinion alike came to the conclusion that more had to be done to frustrate the Soviet expansion in Europe (Larson, 1985: 9). The Czechoslovak coup of February 1948 provided American statesmen with further incentives to support the Europeans in their effort to collaborate against the Soviets within multilateral arrangements. The U.S. Secretary of State adopted a policy of formally associating the United States with a European security organization (Weber, 1991: 26). President Truman was also at this opinion. On the same day the Europeans signed the Brussels Treaty, the President addressed the Congress as follows:

This development deserves our full support. I am confident that the US will extend to the free nations the support which the situation requires. I am sure that the determination of the free countries of Europe to protect themselves will be matched by an equal determination in our part to help them do so (Henderson, 1983: 14).

The U.S. policy makers, however, did not initially agree on the extent of this support. There were two competing views within the Department of State regarding a collective defense arrangement. Kennan and his close colleagues were against a permanent military alliance, whereas a second group associated themselves with the Lovett-Hickerson approach, supporting “the concept of reciprocal obligations” (Ireland, 1981: 80). The latter view gradually became dominant at the State
Department and the U.S. adopted the necessity of a collective defense arrangement in Europe before the Pentagon Talks began in Washington in March 1948 (Foot, 1990: 86).

Lovett, Hickerson, and Vandenberg were the most influential Americans in the process leading up to the signing of the North Atlantic Treaty. They worked together in formulating the idea of a treaty with the Europeans, putting it through the Senate as well as negotiating and signing the Treaty. Their common approach was that the U.S. “had sought peace through weakness but that after many heartbreaks it had reversed its policy and was seeking to deter aggression by proof of determination” ("Foreign Relations of the US (FRUS)", 1974: 153).

Hickerson was especially concerned about the Soviet threat and the Europeans’ insecurity. Therefore he requested prompt action from the U.S. government. In his memorandum of 21 January 1948 to the Department of State, Hickerson concluded that "if the peoples of Europe are prepared to develop a concept of spiritual and material unity and to make this work, there will be no real question as to the long-term relationship of the United States with it" ("FRUS", 1974: 10). After the Czechoslovakian coup on 22 February 1948, Hickerson gave the underlying reason of the coup and put forward his proposal regarding the future of Europe:

Assuming that the Soviet Government has no present desire for war, it appears to be counting on the slowness and uncertainty of American reaction to extend its area of control as far and perhaps as fast as possible before meeting serious resistance. A general stiffening of morale in free Europe is needed, and it can come only from action by this country ("FRUS", 1974: 40).

The Soviet expansionism spread to Scandinavia by the middle of March 1948. Finland was under great pressure from the Soviets for signing a treaty, whereas Norway and Denmark feared an armed invasion. In fact, Norwegian Foreign Minister Halvard Lange cabled both the U.S. and British ambassadors in Oslo: “the Norwegian government had received reliable information indicating that they might be faced with the Soviet demands for a defence pact as soon, or even before, the Soviet-Finnish Treaty had been concluded” (Henderson, 1983: 11). The situation was not better in other parts of Europe. As a result, the U.S. government took the initiative and started to work more closely with the Congress in order to help pass a resolution to have “the right to conclude pacts outside the American continent in peacetime” (Wiggershaus, 1990: 119).

Toward this end the U.S. Senate adopted Resolution 239, the so-called Vandenberg Resolution, named after Senator Arthur H. Vandenberg. The Resolution advised the U.S. government:
[to pursue the foreign-policy objectives of] progressive development of regional and other collective arrangements for individual and collective self-defense in accordance with the purposes, principles, and provisions of the [U.N.] Charter [and] Association of the United States, by the constitutional process, with such regional and other collective arrangements as are based on continuous and effective self-help and mutual aid, and as affect its national security ("FRUS", 1974: 136).

Two conditions for the U.S. involvement in security arrangements, namely the clause of "self-help and mutual aid" and the extent of "threat to its national security" were vaguely worded and would result in future misunderstanding between the U.S. and the Europeans ("FRUS", 1974: 150). However, the passing of the Vandenberg Resolution eliminated the constitutional obstacle for the U.S. government to enter into negotiations with the Europeans on creating a pact.

American foreign policy, then, was transformed between 1945 and 1948. The U.S. thought that it had to stop "the Soviet advance, and this would probably be accomplished by drawing together of the free nations in their own defense" ("FRUS", 1974: 69). In other words, the U.S. came to believe that security among democratic nations was indivisible. Neither pursuing an isolationist foreign policy nor giving unilateral guarantees to other free nations would any longer be acceptable to the U.S. Rather, an optimal solution that would balance both its own and other states' values had to be found. A collective defense arrangement might be such a solution and, in fact, the beginning of this solution was marked by the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan. The U.S., traditionally an isolationist power, adopted a multilateral approach to security issues and became an active player in world politics.

Britain

Britain also transformed its foreign policy between 1945 and 1948. Britain had traditionally supported an alliance among the English-speaking countries and tried to defend its interests in and around its dominions. In the era concerned, however, it discarded its traditional policy and adopted a multilateral approach to international security issues. Without this change in Britain's foreign policy, it would not have been possible to bring together the European nations for either the Brussels Treaty or the North Atlantic Treaty.

In fact, just two weeks after Kennan's Long Telegram, Churchill at Fulton gave his famous "Iron Curtain" talk, in which he argued for developing bilateral relations between the U.S. and Britain in the context of "fraternal association." In other words, Churchill's Fulton speech proposed not a collective defense pact, but "an alliance of the English-
speaking peoples” (Reid, 1977: 29). Given traditional U.S. policy regarding alliances, in an attempt to convince the Americans to develop bilateral security arrangements, Churchill had to stress the Soviet threat and imply that a change in the isolationist tradition of American foreign policy was highly desirable. In his talk, Churchill summarized the security environment of the time as follows:

> From Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic, an iron curtain has descended across the Continent. This is certainly not the Liberated Europe we fought to build up. What [the Soviets] desire is the fruits of war and the indefinite expansion of their power and doctrines. *Our difficulties and dangers will not be removed by closing our eyes to them* (Cook, 1989: 54).

Ernest Bevin, the British Foreign Minister, had initially agreed with Churchill’s view. In a memorandum to the U.S. Department of State, Bevin had proposed an Anglo-American defense agreement: “We must organise and consolidate the ethical and spiritual forces inherent in this western civilisation of which we are the chief protagonists” (“FRUS”, 1974: 5). As the Cold War unfolded, however, Bevin believed in the necessity to redefine the British foreign policy objectives along the lines of St.Laurent’s speech at the United Nations. He ultimately took the initiative in Europe and pushed his government to bring France and the Benelux countries under a defense pact as well as having urged the U.S. to commit itself to this cooperation. He summarized the new British policy as follows:

> We believe that a real effort at organisation of collective security by the Western powers now is more likely to cause an eventual reorientation of policy on the part of the Soviet Union, whereas if we proceed with half measures which are purely economic and financial and do not carry them to their logical conclusion, the Soviet Government might think that is all we are likely to do. This would consequently weaken our position and so might precipitate the conflict which we desire to avoid (“FRUS”, 1974: 79).

Given the increasing Soviet control over Bulgaria, Poland, and Romania, and the Soviet threat to Turkey, Greece and Iran; France and Britain had enough reasons to start negotiations toward creating an organization that would help stop the Soviet expansion. Finally, France and Britain signed the Treaty of Alliance and Mutual Assistance (the Dunkirk Treaty) on 4 March 1947 for a duration of fifty years. The Treaty would trigger an automatic help by military means by one side to the other in case of a Soviet attack.
The U.S. had wanted to see stronger cooperation first among the European states in order to provide them with further economic, political, and military support. At this point, Bevin made a powerful speech at the House of Commons on 22 January 1948 and defended “European unity” that would be achieved without the domination and control of the Soviet Union. Interestingly enough, the catalyst for deeper European integration came from its major foe.

The Soviets, besides supporting the Italian and French strikes, had organized and managed a coup d’état in Czechoslovakia on 22 February 1948. The British and French governments came to believe that in the absence of a policy change the Soviet Union would “continue to expand its power and influence in western Europe by infiltration and by undermining one western European government after another until finally it had secured control of the whole of western Europe” (Reid, 1977: 18). Within a short period of time after the coup, on 17 March 1948, France, Britain, Belgium, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands managed to sign the Brussels Treaty, which stated that “should any of the contracting parties be the object of an armed aggression in Europe, the other signatories to the Treaty would afford the attacked party all the military aid and assistance in their power” (“NATO: Facts and Figures”, 1989: 10). This initiative by Britain, France, and the Benelux countries was not different from the U.S. approach to security issues in Europe, that is, the solution to European security problems would be a multilateral arrangement. For the Europeans, security became an indivisible issue. They perceived the Soviet plan of controlling the free European nations one by one and so acknowledged that the insecurity of a free nation meant the insecurity of other like-minded states. As a result, they agreed to the principle that an attack against one would be considered an attack against them all.

For the British, the Brussels Treaty and the Atlantic Pact were “the work[s] of Bevin” (Reid, 1977: 10). Together with Prime Minister Clement Attlee, Bevin also transformed British policies on the Empire and military commitments, though somewhat reluctantly in the beginning. On 14 February 1947, he announced that the Palestine issue would be submitted to the United Nations and that the withdrawal from India, Burma, Ceylon, and Greece was adopted.

In conclusion, initially Britain announced that it was only interested in an alliance of English-speaking countries. In Churchill's eyes, Britain was victorious and still a world power that did not need any other like-minded state, except for the U.S., to stop the Soviet expansion. Yet, it gradually revised its policy of developing bilateral relations. For Britain now, besides the national interests, its neighbors’ security as well as the freedom of the dominions were important. Britain had tried to maintain its traditional policy of being the balancer of European power politics since the turn of the twentieth century, at the price of both diminishing its own wealth and waging two world wars against Germany. The time had come to make changes to this traditional policy. Accordingly, Britain
adopted a new approach during Bevin’s tenure and came to believe that the democratic nations should unite their power to deter aggressions around the world. Britain now was willing to be an active player in European politics, not only a “balancer,” and to cooperate with other European nations within an institutionalized framework as well as to help the U.S. shoulder the Empire’s previous responsibilities as a world power. As one scholar argued,

for Ernest Bevin and the British, the North Atlantic Treaty was a major historic achievement and transformation of foreign policy, for it firmly committed the United States to a world role that Great Britain could no longer go on fulfilling, the role of an active and powerful arbiter of peace and freedom in Europe in particular and the world in general, the role that Britain exercised and America had shielded behind for two centuries (Cook, 1989: viii).

France: The German Question and Mitigating the French Fear

France had traditionally wished to see a weak and divided Germany. As a reaction to Bismarck’s alliance system, it had allied itself with Britain and Russia and imposed heavy reparations on Germany by the Versailles Treaty. Having been defeated and invaded by Germany during the Second World War, France was cautious about the German power in the era concerned. Therefore France initially tried to address its security concerns consistent with its own belief system: it occupied a part of Germany, rejected the merger of its occupation zone with the Bizonia, and asked the U.S. to commit ground troops in Europe. However, France ultimately redefined its security interests and its foreign policy approach. It cooperated with the U.S. and the European nations within the European Recovery Program, accepted the principle of trizonal fusion and also started pursuing a relatively constructive approach toward “the German question.”

The “German question” has had two distinct definitions. Beginning in the seventeenth century, the question has meant to the Germans getting united under one state and not becoming locked within the tight frame of European policies. However, to other European nations the “German question” has meant securing the stability and balance of power in Europe against the Germans. As one scholar summarized it, maybe “the tragedy of German history is that the European balance of power was based on disunity in the center of Europe” (Wallmann, 1986: 3). From this perspective, a united Germany is believed to have been too dynamic for any stable European state system and a threat to the political independence and economic well-being of its neighbors.

The Holy Roman Emperor Ferdinand II had launched the first unifying attempt during the Thirty Years’ War. This policy, however, had
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been abandoned by 1648 (Calleo, 1978: 4). After the Westphalia Peace Treaty, with Germany disunited, European history was dominated by the French-British rivalry for more than two hundred years. Only after 1870 did Bismarck formulate a German raison d'etat (Wallmann, 1986: 3). Bismarck tried to keep German unification as a tolerable issue for other European states by pursuing a predictable foreign policy. This foreign policy principle, however, was disregarded by Bismarck's successors. At the turn of the twentieth century, the “Germans saw themselves fatally handicapped. For while the United States, Russia, and even Britain were on the periphery of Europe, Germany lay in its middle” (Calleo, 1978: 5). This mood led Germany to follow imperialistic policies before the First World War and expansionist policies in the process leading up to the Second World War (Gortemaker, 1994: 4-11). To have relatively secure boundaries and become more powerful, then, Germany considered it necessary to blend the policy of unification with expansionism.

The question of what to do with the German power was revisited in the second half of the 1940s. Although France was not ready for German recovery, the U.S. had been following a policy of including the Germans in its post-war programs to “help create the European balance of power, to forestall increased American military spending, and to prevent a major U.S. commitment to participate in European security” (Ireland, 1981: 74). Therefore, the zonal agreement and the occupation plans of Germany were approved by the U.S. and Britain at Yalta on 6 February 1945. These agreements and plans provided “military occupation in prescribed zones, joint occupation of Berlin in three sectors, and an Allied Control Council to make policy for all of Germany” (Deporte, 1979: 55).

The Soviets not only blocked the German peace-treaty negotiations with reparation demands, but also rejected any U.S. peace proposal. This Soviet approach led the U.S. to merge its occupation zone with that of the British so as to create the “Western Bizonia.” Although France was not one of the “Big Three” immediately after the War, it later joined them and got its own occupation zone. France, however, initially refused to merge its occupation zone with the Bizonia; it was suspicious of any policy that would help Germany become a powerful nation again in the center of Europe. As such “from the French point of view, American efforts threatened to create an imbalance of power” (Ireland, 1981: 74). France also “expressed a desire to detach the Saar and Ruhr from Germany and to incorporate them into the French economy” (Ireland, 1981: 61). This French psychology of the mid-1940s is well summarized by Desmond Dinan:

Even as the United States and Great Britain revised their harsh policies toward Germany, France stuck stubbornly to a number of severe strictures. Germany would be demilitarized, decentralized, and deindustrialized. France had suffered grievously from German militarism and

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expansionism, far more than either Britain or the United States. The humiliation and horror of World War II would not be quickly forgotten. Not suprisingly, France refused to merge its occupation zone into the newly established Anglo-American Bizonia in May 1947 (Dinan, 1994: 19).

The Fourth French Republic, facing an ideological confrontation, was also threatened to collapse from within. Therefore, without first giving the French some concrete guarantees, the U.S. did not want to push them to give concessions on Germany that would further destabilize the European political scene. In fact, French Foreign Minister Bidault convinced the Americans that France would not support the idea of an independent German state without the U.S. promise of sufficient support not only to stop Soviet expansion but also to deter any German threat to French security.

The increasing Soviet hold on the European nations and the U.S. efforts to mitigate the French government’s fear by stationing American forces in Germany ultimately convinced the French to adopt a multilateral approach to its security concerns in general and to the “German question” in particular. A common policy on the future of Germany was adopted by the Western powers after the London Conference had proved to be a failure. On 6 March 1948, the three occupying states, excluding the Soviet Union, acceded to “the full association of the western zones of Germany in the European Recovery Program” (Ireland, 1981: 72). This meant creating an independent “West Germany.”

France, then, had transformed its foreign policy by March 1948. Although American assurances were critical in the French approval of the trizonal fusion, France did not consider it rational to pursue a unilateral security policy. It adopted a multilateral approach and cooperated with the United States and Canada as well as other democratic European nations to deter the Soviet threat and keep German power under control. As the accession of West Germany to the North Atlantic Treaty and the signing of the Rome Treaty would further demonstrate, for France too, the solution to the security problems in Europe could be found within international institutions rather than unilateral policies.

Canada

Canada also changed its foreign policy approach in the aftermath of the War with the policies of Louis S. St.Laurent and Lester B. Pearson. Although Canada had traditionally allied itself with Britain and France, it came to believe that it should not be easily dragged into a colonial or another world war that it would not want to fight. Moreover, Canada was now willing to be more active in world politics. As we will see below, during the negotiations on the North Atlantic Treaty, Canada was also the ardent advocate of cooperation on issues other than military. In the post-
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war era Canada transformed its approach to world politics in a way to pursue independent policies from both Britain and France and cooperate with European states within an institutionalized framework.

When the U.N. Security Council was blocked by the Soviet veto in the aftermath of the War, some members felt the urgency of founding another security organization. Canada was one of them. On 13 May 1946, Pearson stated, in the name of the Canadians, that “we do not expect our membership in the UN to prevent our working out special arrangements with powers who wish to cooperate with us and which are consistent with our obligations under the Charter” (Pearson, 1973: 40). Foreign Minister St.Laurent also shared this view and Prime Minister King did not oppose the Pearson-St.Laurent approach. On 18 September 1947, St.Laurent addressed the U.N. General Assembly as follows:

Nations in their search for peace and co-operation, will not, and cannot, accept indefinitely an unaltered council which was set up to ensure their security and which, so many feel, has become frozen in futility and divided by dissension. If forced, they may seek greater safety in an association of democratic and peace-loving states willing to accept more specific international obligations in return for a greater measure of national security (Pearson, 1973: 41).

The text was written by Pearson himself and was considered a milestone in the Treaty process as well as representing a major change in traditional Canadian foreign policy. Although the Canadians participated in the two world wars beside the U.S., France, and Britain, a formal alliance with these countries and other free European states was something new to them.

The United States, Britain, and France, together with Canada, thus, transformed their foreign policies between 1945 and 1948. Not only to defeat the Soviet aggression but also to deter future threats to the free world, they now came to believe that security among democratic nations was an indivisible issue. Accordingly, an attack against one of them would mean an attack against them all. Now they were ready to sign a treaty on collective defense that would help demonstrate this willingness to match any aggressive behavior with their combined power. They were no longer satisfied with their past collaboration on security issues, and they now believed that a collective arrangement would be better than any unilateral or bilateral initiatives in the endeavor to bring peace to Europe and North America. As the North Atlantic Treaty would submit, the Western powers were now determined “to promote stability and well-being in the North Atlantic area [and] to unite their efforts for collective defense and for the preservation of peace and security” (“NATO Handbook”, 2001: 527). In sum, in early 1948, all the major powers
thought that some kind of collective defense arrangement was necessary and, as a result, they started preliminary talks in Washington D.C.

NEGOTIATING THE NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY

The preceding two sections explain how the major powers came to adopt a multilateral approach to international security issues. They also put forward the indivisibility of security and nondiscrimination as the basic principles around which these powers agreed to cooperate. This section reviews the negotiation process of the North Atlantic Treaty in an attempt to demonstrate the principle of diffuse reciprocity among the signatories.

The negotiation process of the North Atlantic Treaty may be divided into three phases: 1) "Pentagon Talks" among the United States, Canada, and Britain that started on 22 March 1948; 2) "Exploratory Talks on Security" that were held in Washington D.C. between the participants of the Pentagon Talks and the signatories of the Brussels Treaty from 6 July 1948 to 15 March 1949; and 3) The negotiations phase, in which Denmark, Italy, Norway, and Portugal participated, that lasted from 15 March 1949 until the signing of the Treaty on 4 April 1949.

The Pentagon Talks were kept secret among the U.S., Britain, and Canada. They feared that "if France or any other of the Brussels Treaty countries were told about the tripartite talks they would suspect that plans were being drawn up which would overlook their interests" (Henderson, 1983: 14). The talks created the Pentagon Paper that made recommendations about membership, treaty area, characteristics of assistance that would be provided in the event of aggression, and the legal position of the proposed treaty vis-a-vis the U.N. Charter.

The question of which nations could be invited to join the pact constituted the core of the discussions throughout the Washington Talks. Whereas France insisted on the membership of Italy, another Catholic and Mediterranean country, the other nations tended to reject it, arguing that it would expand their guarantees and thus weaken the pact. Objections were also raised against Portuguese membership on the grounds that Portugal was not a democracy (Deporte, 1989: 56; Woyke, 1993: 259). Only the United States insisted on Portuguese membership, because "the Azores were of great importance" for North American and European security ("FRUS", 1974: 169). The other participants, as well as American public opinion, however, never supported this view. In fact, some believed that the alliance paid a high price for including Portugal in the Treaty, because "until the Portuguese dictatorship was overthrown, Portuguese membership alienated opinion in Africa and Asia" (Reid, 1977: 200). The participation of the Scandinavian states in the pact, on the other hand, was supported by all of the parties at the Washington Talks. The Scandinavians were both democratic and strategically
important. The U.S. also wished to see Ireland as a signatory of the Treaty right from the beginning and asked the Irish government its opinion in January 1949. The Irish said “they would be pleased to participate in the negotiations of the North Atlantic Treaty provided that they could do so on behalf of a united Ireland” (Henderson, 1983: 105). However, “neither the Americans nor anyone else was willing to press London on this delicate issue” (Pearson, 1973: 55).

Besides insisting on Italian membership, France wanted the Treaty to cover Algeria. Although none of the participants supported the French in the beginning, they finally had to incorporate “the Algerian Departments of France” in the Treaty because, as St.Laurent expressed, “Algeria was not a matter of great importance in relation to the main purposes of the Treaty, but France was essential” (Pearson, 1973: 55). As such, only by including Italy, Portugal, French Algeria as well as the Scandinavian countries and by excluding Ireland were the participants at the Washington Talks able to define a “North Atlantic area” (“FRUS”, 1975: 222-223).

There were two distinct approaches at the Washington Talks regarding the extent of the signatories’ responsibilities. The Europeans wanted an alliance along the lines of the Dunkirk Treaty and the Brussels Pact. However, the United States rejected the European approach on the grounds that both the Dunkirk Treaty and the Brussels Pact proposed an automatic commitment to help the suffered party from an armed attack. An automatic commitment clause in the Treaty would not be acceptable to the U.S. because, for one thing, it was cautious of being dragged into a war that it would not want to fight and, for another, according to the U.S. constitution, the right to declare war belonged not to the administration but to the Congress. When the Europeans perceived that the U.S. government was in a difficult position regarding the automatic commitment, they finally agreed to Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty, which stated that in case of an armed attack, each of the parties would “assist the Party or Parties so attacked by taking such action as it deems necessary.” As such, the individual states would decide on the nature and amount of assistance they might extend to the victim. In an attempt to allay the Europeans’ fear of its isolationism, the U.S. agreed to Article 3 of the Treaty. Accordingly, “by means of continuous and effective self-help and mutual aid,” the parties would “maintain and develop their individual and collective capacity to resist armed attack.” As one scholar argued, Article 3 would be “used by the Europeans to progressively involve the United States in the full range of continental security issues” (Ireland, 1981: 224).

The disagreement on the signatories’ prospective responsibilities led the participants not to define the concept of “attack,” whether it be direct or indirect. The signatories ultimately reached a compromise also on this issue. On the one hand, they concluded in the Washington Paper that “the question of fact as to whether or not an armed attack had
occurred would be a matter for individual determination;” on the other hand, however, they adopted the principle of consultation (“FRUS”, 1974: 245). Accordingly, whenever any one of the parties “considered that the territorial integrity, political independence or security of itself or any other ally was threatened,” that party would participate in consultation with all the other parties (Reid, 1977: 165).

The participants also had long debates at the Washington Talks about the status of the proposed pact vis-a-vis the United Nations. They could either define the pact as a regional arrangement under Chapter 8 of the U.N. Charter, or consider it a collective defense system under Article 51. According to the U.S. and Britain, declaring the pact as a regional arrangement would result in applying Article 53 to all actions taken by the parties. In other words, these actions could be vetoed by the Soviet Union, which was a permanent member of the U.N. Security Council. Eventually the signatories agreed that if an armed attack occurs “each of them, in exercise of the right of individual or collective self-defence recognised by Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, will assist the Party or Parties so attacked.” However, they also clearly stated that this would affect neither the role of the Security Council nor the responsibilities of the signatories as members of the United Nations. The second paragraph of Article 5 reads as follows: “any armed attack and all measures taken as a result thereof shall immediately be reported to the Security Council. Such measures shall be terminated when the Security Council has taken the measures necessary to restore and maintain international peace and security.” Article 7 reiterates this commitment: The North Atlantic Treaty “does not affect in any way the rights and obligations under the Charter of the Parties which are members of the United Nations, or the primary responsibility of the Security Council for the maintenance of international peace and security.”

The parties also debated about their cooperation on economic, social, and cultural issues. Right from the beginning of the negotiations, the Canadians wished to see institutionalized cooperation among the Western powers beyond military issues. They thought the Soviet threat would gradually wither away and the pact could transform into a “community which would increasingly acquire the characteristics of a federation” (Reid, 1977: 187). As Pearson expressed at the Washington Talks, Canada wanted to see “the creation of a new system” (“FRUS”, 1974: 175). Put differently, the Canadians were in favor of supranationalism and, therefore, they pressed the other parties for including a strong article in the Treaty with regard to economic, social, and cultural cooperation. The U.S., Belgium, and the Netherlands, in fact, supported the Canadian proposal during the early phase of the talks. However, as the negotiations unfolded, enthusiasm faded and it became clear that the parties, except the Canadians, did not want to commit themselves to issues other than security and defense. This was implicit in the wording of the Washington Paper that only mentioned the
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“strengthening of the economic, social, and cultural ties which bind them” ("FRUS", 1974: 242-243). By February 1949, Canada lost further support. After Dean Acheson had succeeded Marshall as the U.S. Secretary of State, the Americans opposed the Canadian view on the grounds that senators did not like it.

Canada provided further reasons for incorporating a strong article in the Treaty regarding cooperation on economic, social, and cultural issues; this time they emphasized the domestic political concerns. Canadian diplomats were concerned about finding support at home, especially in Quebec, for a security arrangement that would be composed of only military commitments. At the twelfth meeting of the Washington Talks, Mr. Wrong, the Canadian Ambassador in Washington D.C., expressed this concern as follows:

The Government would be able to win more support for the Pact in Canada if it was not purely military in character. This point would carry considerable weight with several political groups. [I hope] that the political necessities in Canada would be borne in mind in any further discussions between Mr. Acheson and the senators ("FRUS", 1975: 86).

Besides the United States, Britain also opposed the Canadian proposal on the grounds that there were already institutions working for economic cooperation and that extending commitments into non-military areas would result in a clash of national interests (Knapp, 1993: 349). Moreover, Britain blocked any initiative that would transform the OEEC into a supranational body, thus leaving itself out of the European cooperation on economic issues that goes beyond the intergovernmental level (Schwabe, 1993: 32-34).

The Canadian proposal ultimately resulted in the adoption of Article 2 of the North Atlantic Treaty, known as “the Canadian Article.” Accordingly,

The parties [undertook] to contribute toward the further development of peaceful and friendly international relations by strengthening their free institutions, by bringing about a better understanding of the principles upon which these institutions are founded, and by promoting conditions of stability and well-being, [to] eliminate conflict in their international economic policies [as well as to] encourage economic collaboration.

As the negotiations demonstrated, the parties had the belief that democratic nations should unite their resources in the effort to frustrate any aggression in the North Atlantic region. They wanted to cooperate on
the principle of diffuse reciprocity and had in mind to build long-term cooperation on security issues. Therefore they did not want to alienate any party by disregarding its security concerns. Ultimately the participants were able to reach compromises on all critical issues and managed to sign the North Atlantic Treaty on 4 April 1949. The original twelve signatories of the North Atlantic Treaty were as follows: Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Great Britain, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, and the United States.

CONCLUSION

In the aftermath of the War the democratic nations were able to cooperate on security issues around certain principles. To reiterate, according to Ruggie’s definition, multilateralism has three distinct principles: indivisibility, nondiscrimination, and diffuse reciprocity. The preceding discussion puts forward the view that the process leading up to the signing of the Treaty reflect all of these principles.

The Soviets’ expansionist policies had urged the Western powers to reconsider their approach to institutionalized cooperation on security issues. Cooperation among the Western powers, however, required a mind change in their approach to security issues and a major transformation in their foreign policies. A handful of statesmen were influential in this regard. Each of them had seen the necessity of a multilateral solution to the security problems in the postwar era. They came to believe that all democracies should unite their efforts toward defeating any aggression by autocratic nations, that European nations should reconcile their differences because the poverty and insecurity of a free nation does not mean the security of other like-minded states, that they should solve their differences through peaceful means so as to unite their power in deterring aggression, and that they should leave the door open to other democratic nations in the effort to bring stability to European politics. In other words, some statesmen at critical positions in a handful of democracies came to believe that security among the democratic nations was an indivisible issue. Moreover, this cooperation would be based on reciprocal obligations rather than one power or a group of nations shouldering all the responsibility or the domination of all other nations by one powerful state.

As a result of this belief, all the major powers transformed their foreign policies before the negotiations actually started in mid-1948. The U.S. discarded its traditional isolationism and its fear of participating in “entangling alliances.” It considered it inevitable to accept the responsibilities of a world power as well as formally and actively cooperate with the European nations within formal security arrangements. It emerged from its isolationism and started playing a leadership role in world politics. Britain also adopted a multilateral approach to international security issues after the War and transformed
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its foreign policy approach. Traditionally it was interested in alliances with English-speaking nations and concerned about maintaining security in and around its dominions. It had been involved in European politics only as a “balancer.” However, Britain managed to redefine its national interests. As a result, it became a major player in European security issues: it signed the Dunkirk Treaty with France as well as motivated the European nations to sign the Brussels Treaty. Britain also peacefully transferred to the U.S. the role of a global power. It cooperated with the U.S. on security issues and helped some of its old dominions to become independent in an attempt to further stabilize European and global politics.

France, having suffered from the German invasion and massive devastation, was initially cautious about any plan that would help the Germans recover. It occupied a part of Germany and initially refused to accede to the fusion agreement. France, however, ultimately adopted a multilateral approach to international security. Blocking the German recovery would neither help its own economic development program nor contribute to the free nations’ endeavor to deter Soviet aggression. France gradually played a crucial role in the signing of the Dunkirk and Brussels Treaties and agreed to at least the creation of West Germany by uniting its occupation zone with the U.S.-British Bizonia. France, moreover, cooperated with the U.S. within the European Recovery Program and, as later developments would better demonstrate, it started to pursue a more constructive policy toward the German question by trying to tame German power within international institutions rather than planning unilateral or bilateral arrangements. Canada also transformed its foreign policy in the process leading up to the signing of the North Atlantic Treaty. Canada had traditionally allied itself with Britain, France, and the U.S., though not within an institutionalized framework. It also had been highly influenced by the British and French positions on world issues in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Following the Second World War, however, Canada not only began to pursue a relatively independent policy but also wanted to play an active role in security issues. It even pushed other Western powers for cooperation on economic and social issues at the supranational level. Rather than an alliance between English-speaking nations or a policy of isolationism, Canada opted for institutionalized cooperation with the U.S. and European nations. The major powers, then, came to believe in the indivisibility of security among democratic nations and transformed their foreign policies. The final product of this process, that is the North Atlantic Treaty, reflected this principle of multilateralism. Article 5 stated that “an armed attack against one or more of them shall be considered an attack against them all.”

This process of transformation also demonstrates that the Western powers followed the principle of nondiscrimination in their relations. First of all, neither the U.S. nor Britain nor any other major power were in
favor of a bilateral solution to security problems after the War. The U.S.,
for example, rejected Churchill's proposal of developing bilateral relations
in the context of “fraternal association.” Britain and France wanted the
Dunkirk Treaty expanded to include other democratic European nations,
and this policy ultimately resulted in the signing of the Brussels Treaty.
Moreover, the principle of nondiscrimination also required the parties to
pay close attention to the critical security concerns they had. The United
States tried not to alienate France by understanding its concern about
the German recovery and, therefore, it committed resources in an
attempt to allay the French fear of increasing German power. The
French, on the other hand, did not block the recovery of a democratic
Germany and its accession to the Treaty in only a few years after the
signing of the Treaty. Furthermore, the major powers tried to include all
democracies in the Treaty. They would welcome the participation of the
Republic of Ireland, but not at the expense of excluding Britain from the
process. Territorial integrity and nonintervention in domestic issues had
been critical principles of conduct in the relations between democracies.
The major powers also endeavored to include the democratic
Scandinavian nations in the Treaty. Denmark, Iceland, and Norway were
among the original signatories of the Treaty. The Western powers, then,
were willing to cooperate around generalized organizing principles, that
is, they did not base their cooperation on discriminatory principles.

The Treaty reflects this principle of nondiscrimination. The
signatories were accepted as equal partners in the Treaty. Moreover, the
pact did not target any nation nor did it close its doors to future
democratic accessions. Article 10 provided that “the parties may, by
unanimous agreement, invite any other European state in a position to
further the principles of the Treaty and to contribute to the security of
the North Atlantic area to accede to the Treaty.” Besides, with Article 8,
the signatories undertook “not to enter into any international
engagement in conflict with the Treaty.”

The negotiation phase of the Treaty further demonstrated that the
Western powers wanted long-term cooperation on security and defense
issues rather than exchanging quid- pro-quo. Put differently, they
followed the principle of diffuse reciprocity. They were ready to make
concessions that would help create a long-term relationship with one
another on security issues and that would make it possible to sign the
North Atlantic Treaty. Multilateralism has meant not insisting on one-
sided national interests but taking into account other nations’
 perspectives in formulating security policies. The parties, having adopted
such an approach to security issues in the late 1940s, managed to reach
a compromise on all critical issues.

On the membership issue, as France wished, Italy and French
Algeria were included in the Treaty. Also Portugal became a signatory as
a result of U.S. support. Leaving Portugal, which was struggling to
emerge from autocratic rule, out of the pact would also mean
abandoning the Portuguese to their fate. On the issue of the extent of the signatories' responsibilities, the parties rejected the proposal of automatic commitment but integrated Article 3 into the Treaty. Moreover, even though the determination of an armed attack was left to the individual decision of member states, the Treaty prescribed that such a decision be taken through consultations. The status of the pact vis-a-vis the U.N. was another issue of compromise. The final version of the Treaty stated that, in case of an armed attack, the parties would be using their inherent right of individual and collective self defense recognized by Article 51 of the U.N. Charter. However, the Treaty also indicated that this right cannot be interpreted as affecting either the parties' rights under the Charter or the responsibility of the Security Council. On another issue of debate; that is, cooperating on social, economic, and cultural issues, even though the parties rejected a supranational approach, they consented to integrating an article into the Treaty that aims to promote democratic values and eliminate conflict in the signatories' international economic relations. In short, the parties were willing to cooperate around the principle of reciprocity. The Preamble of the Treaty as well as Articles 2, 3, and 8 reflect this principle.

In conclusion, the process leading up to the signing of the North Atlantic Treaty constitutes a good case for multilateralism. The cooperation between the democratic nations based on certain principles in the late 1940s not only succeeded in deterring the threats of the time but has become an enduring example of keeping the peace and maintaining stability in the world.

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