
Europe, America and 11 September¹

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ABSTRACT

The foreign policy behaviour of the US administration of George W. Bush caused political consternation in European capitals throughout the administration's first nine months in office. From a European perspective, the Bush administration appeared bent on aggressively unilateral policies on issues ranging from the Kyoto Protocol to missile defence, the treatment of rogue states (particularly Iraq and North Korea) and the Middle East. Then came 11 September 2001. This article describes how Europe—particularly the EU—has responded, what it has contributed to the war on terrorism, and how the crisis is likely to shape the development of the EU as a political project. Its central argument is that despite appearances (a unilateral US and a weak and divided EU), the functional pressures engendered by the global war on terrorism are likely both to have strong disciplinary effects on US foreign policy and to produce a more united, integrated Europe.

INTRODUCTION

In foreign policy, more than any other area touched by European integration, the EU has faced withering criticism for its inability to act quickly, decisively or effectively. The EU has richly deserved much of the opprobrium, or at least has brought it upon itself by seeking to convince the world in the early 1990s that it was creating a truly common European foreign policy, which would replace individual national ones. This new Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP, or PESC in French and—most regrettably—GASP in German) would cover 'all aspects of foreign and security policy'. All member states would support it 'actively and unreservedly in a spirit of loyalty and mutual solidarity'. Under the CFSP, EU states promised to 'refrain from any action which [was] contrary to the interests of the Union or likely to impair its effectiveness as a cohesive force in international relations'.²

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²Council of the European Union, *Treaty on European Union and Treaty Establishing the European Community*, consolidated versions (Brussels, 1997), 16.

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Even before the CFSP was agreed, via the 1992 Maastricht Treaty, the EU was already on a path towards humiliation in the Balkans. At the earliest stages of the war in the former Yugoslavia, in June 1991, the foreign minister of the state holding the EU's rotating presidency, Jacques Poos of Luxembourg, cited an EU-brokered ceasefire as proof of the Union's diplomatic maturity. Hours before the ceasefire fell apart he told reporters that 'this is the hour of Europe, not the hour of the Americans'. It proved to be the best-remembered statement in the history of 'EU foreign policy', for all the wrong reasons. The bloodiest conflict in European post-war history ensued, and consumed the continent for the next ten years. The period featured substantial disunity and solo diplomacy by EU member states, and made a mockery of the CFSP.³

There is no doubt that the EU learned from its nightmare in the Balkans. Lessons were learned, not least about the consequences of raising expectations outside Europe about the Union's capabilities in foreign policy beyond what was realistic, and then disappointing them.⁴ In fact, by playing down external expectations, focusing on its 'near abroad' and deploying traditional European Community policy tools (such as trade and aid) at the service of the CFSP, the Union in the 1990s notched up a variety of policy successes, however low-key and unnoticed by the media, in the Balkans, the Mediterranean region, and Central and Eastern Europe.

Then came an entirely new and profound challenge for the CFSP: the terrorist atrocities of 11 September 2001 in the United States. European political classes had spent the previous nine months reflecting on how the EU could and should respond to the perceived aggressive unilateralism of the new US administration under George W. Bush. The obvious conclusion drawn in most European capitals was that the EU needed to find ways to speak with one voice. Otherwise, European preferences on issues such as global warming, missile defence, the treatment of 'rogue states', and the conflict in the Middle East risked being ignored or defied by contrary American action. However, 11 September made European unity seem even more urgent for opposite reasons: because Europe now had to show solidarity with a US administration struggling to respond to a devastating foreign attack on American soil. In the days immediately after 11 September, the EU response was forceful and rapid, at least by EU standards.⁵

Before long, however, the EU found itself marginalised as the US prosecuted the war in Afghanistan almost by itself, even spurning offers of European military assets. Only when the war 'ended',⁶ and Afghanistan's Taliban regime collapsed far more quickly and abruptly than expected, did Western attention turn to peacekeeping, humanitarian aid and post-war reconstruction, thus thrusting the EU into a central role. Even then, the Union showed that it remained prone to promising far more than

³On the CFSP, see John Peterson and Helene Sjursen (eds), *A common foreign policy for Europe?* (London, 1998); Roy H. Ginsberg, *The European Union in international politics* (Lanham, Md., 2001). On the persistence of national foreign policies in Europe, see Ian Manners and Richard G. Whitman (eds), *The foreign policies of the European Union member states* (Manchester, 2000).

⁴The most fluent and persuasive diagnosis of this problem, which is central to the failings of the CFSP, is Christopher Hill, 'Closing the capability-expectations gap?', in Peterson and Sjursen, *A common foreign policy for Europe?*

⁵See Edward Bannerman, Steven Everts, Heather Grabbe, Charles Grant and Alasdair Murray, *Europe after 11th September* (London, 2001).

⁶In fact, the US and its allies (especially the UK and Afghan opposition forces) were forced to continue military operations in pursuit of Taliban and al-Qaeda forces in the mountains of south-western Afghanistan (on the border with Pakistan) for more than six months after the Taliban government collapsed in late 2001.

it could deliver. At the EU's December 2001 Laeken summit, another foreign minister from another Benelux state holding the EU's rotating presidency, Louis Michel of Belgium, claimed (outrageously) that the EU would be sending a peacekeeping force to Afghanistan, with troops contributed by all fifteen member states, despite the fact that several member governments had not even been informed of the proposal to do so.⁷

Worse, within a few months of the apparent victory in Afghanistan, the transatlantic coalition against terrorism seemed to be unravelling. European leaders lambasted Bush for his rhetoric about an 'axis of evil' and his non-engagement in the Middle East conflict. In the European press, headlines bellowed: 'Washington turns deaf ear to Europe's divided voices'.⁸ Pundits lamented that 'Europe at one stage almost became a global political idea, but it is now on the way to returning to the status of a geographical expression, hardly more coherent than it was after the Treaty of Westphalia'.⁹

Of course, it was possible to dismiss such analyses as exaggerated, or at least premature, given that the war on terrorism clearly would continue for years and demand very close transatlantic cooperation. The purely functional pressures for such collaboration between the US and 'Europe'—both European states individually and the EU collectively—were, arguably, both powerful and inescapable. Moreover, several steps removed from the headlines, evidence could be found of the EU's emergence as a more forceful foreign policy actor (see section 1 below).

A broader question is precisely how, and how much, the international world changed on 11 September. The events of that day were so horrific and dramatic as to invite breathless (and predictable) claims that everything had changed in international politics, and that nothing would ever be the same again. An alternative, more plausible interpretation is that the war on terrorism has highlighted, and will continue to highlight, cardinal features of the post-Cold War order, including several that were already clear before hijacked airplanes struck the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. What is really new about the war on terrorism is that it offers fresh evidence to be assessed in debates about whether or not the modern international order differs fundamentally from the Cold War order that preceded it. Thus far the evidence suggests as much continuity—in the sense of systemic constraints on US foreign policy—as change, although some of the most important changes concern the role of the EU.

This article has four ambitions. First, it distils the most basic contours of a 'European perspective' on 11 September—even if, by definition, the 'European perspective' on just about anything resembles a colourful Scottish tartan, with lines of varying hues criss-crossing and intersecting. Second, it goes beyond the question 'how has Europe reacted?' to ask 'what has Europe done?', both collectively and as individual states, as part of an international coalition in the war on terrorism. Third, it reverses the latter question and asks 'what has the crisis done to Europe?' That is, what effect has it had (and will it have) on the development of the European Union as a political project? Finally, the article grapples (briefly) with questions about what the aftermath of 11 September tells us about the nature of the post-Cold War order: How different is it from the Cold War order? Is American power unchallenged and unfettered? Or is it effectively tethered by the functional pressures of maintaining a transatlantic alliance at the core of the wider coalition in the war on terrorism?

⁷In fact, the peacekeeping force sent was very much a European one, with the UK in the lead, but by no stretch of the imagination could it be considered an 'EU force'.

⁸*Financial Times*, 13 February 2002.

⁹Jacques Julliard, 'L'Europe du bricolage', *Nouvel Observateur*, 2–9 January 2002; my translation.

1. HOW HAS 'EUROPE' RESPONDED?

When news of the terrorist attacks in New York and Washington first reached Europe the political reaction was immediate, united and poignant. On 11 September 2001 the EU's foreign policy troika—representatives of its rotating presidency, the European Commission and the 'high representative' of the CFSP (Javier Solana)—had been convened in its most senior permutation for a typically nitty-gritty series of exchanges on trade and cooperation with Ukraine. Visiting a far-flung corner of Crimea, presumably to show diplomatic respect for one of Europe's largest countries (but one that remains a no-hoper for EU membership any time soon), were the Belgian prime minister, Guy Verhofstadt (along with Louis Michel), the Commission president, Romano Prodi, and Solana. On the grim three-and-a-half-hour return flight to Brussels no member of the troika would offer any individual comment on the terrorist attacks to the handful of journalists who had accompanied them to Ukraine. Instead, the troika appeared together (along with the commissioner for external affairs, Chris Patten) at an impromptu press conference at a Belgian military airfield, where Verhofstadt spoke for the EU as a whole (in three languages and without notes) expressing Europe's collective grief and promising to stand shoulder to shoulder with the US. One witness described it as 'impressive stuff...[surmounting] the EU's inability to get its message across...this time it got it right. The reaction was swift, the message was moving and for once Europe spoke with a single voice'.¹⁰

Of course, it was not long before differences in tone, nuance and even content began to appear in statements from European political capitals. From London, Tony Blair's early statements gave the impression that the UK was determined to be a full (if not equal) partner in the design and execution of America's 'war on terrorism'. Blair and Blair alone, as opposed to Solana or some other representative of the EU as a whole, attended the joint session of Congress at which George W. Bush gave his first political speech on the crisis. It soon became clear that Blair was acting as Europe's primary envoy to the US, and America's primary envoy to the rest of Europe. He also became a leading emissary of the West as a whole to states—including Iran, Syria and Pakistan—most implicated in or affected by the events of 11 September.

Meanwhile, the emphasis of political messages from Paris gradually drifted away from total solidarity with the Americans, despite early and very emotional pro-American commentary in the French media.¹¹ Predictably, a familiar split began to emerge—broadly corresponding to right and left in French politics—once the military campaign began in Afghanistan. The appearance of this split in France was hardly surprising given that an election loomed less than six months away, with an overwhelming majority of French voters perceiving little difference between the programmes of the two leading candidates.¹² The neo-Gaullist French president, Jacques Chirac, while generally supporting Bush administration's policy, also

¹⁰Gareth Harding, 'Europe stands united to support US', *European Voice*, 13–19 September 2001.

¹¹'We [that is, we French] are all Americans' was the headline on page 1 of *Le Monde* on 13 September.

¹²A Louis Harris poll in February 2002 found that no fewer than 74% of French voters saw no or little difference between the political programmes of Jacques Chirac and Lionel Jospin. This finding helps to explain the extremely low turnout for the first round of the presidential election on 21 April, and Jospin's shock defeat at the hands of the far right candidate, Jean-Marie Le Pen. See <http://permanent.nouvelobs.com/politique/20020225.OBS3472.html> (25 February 2002).

appeared to pay little heed to the need to maintain a common EU line.¹³ Meanwhile, leading figures on the French left soon resumed their habitual condemnation of the Bush administration as a far-right-wing, corporate-controlled, militaristic and environmentally catastrophic regime, leading a country that was a lonely, self-absorbed bully taking out its rage on Afghans living in medieval conditions.¹⁴ French public support for the war effort in Afghanistan eroded quickly, falling from about two-thirds to half in the weeks before the Taliban government buckled. One poll revealed that three-quarters of citizens in France—home to around five million Muslims—believed that American foreign policy bore some responsibility for the rise of Islamic fanaticism. No European government was more contemptuous of Bush's 'axis of evil' speech in January 2002, with Hubert Védrine, the French foreign minister, labelling US policy 'simplistic' and conceived 'unilaterally, without consulting others'.¹⁵

Meanwhile, Berlin and Rome both struggled to show political solidarity with Washington in the face of growing doubts about American policy amongst ordinary Germans and Italians. Gerhard Schröder declared Germany's 'unlimited solidarity' with Washington and its willingness to 'take risks, even military ones' in the war on terrorism, as Germany had 'at last joined the West' as an unencumbered military power.¹⁶ However, his government's ambitions for a dramatic foreign policy shift met with dissent from both public opinion and Schröder's coalition partners, the Greens. Even in the immediate aftermath of 11 September only a slim majority of German citizens supported German participation in military action against terrorism.¹⁷ More than half wanted the bombing of Afghanistan to end well before it did. Green Party chapters in four of Germany's sixteen *Länder* condemned military retaliation against terrorism. The urgings of the Green Party's co-leader and the Schröder government's foreign minister, Joschka Fischer, that Germany should contribute to military actions in support of just causes seemed to fall on many deaf ears within his own party.

The Italian government under Silvio Berlusconi, still less than four months old, seemed determined to give total support to the Bush administration, while also distancing itself—in a dramatic reversal of traditional Italian policy—from the rest of the EU. However, Berlusconi's claim that Western civilisation was 'superior' to that of a Muslim world still 'stuck in the middle ages' shocked the Western diplomatic community and reinforced the impression that Rome continued to count for little in EU foreign policy. As in Germany, public support in Italy for the US military action in Afghanistan fell sharply as the campaign went on.

In smaller European countries—including Austria, Finland and Greece—majorities opposed Western military action from the start of the crisis. A particularly sobering finding for those who hoped or believed that 11 September had reinforced

¹³Participants agreed that it was, above all, Chirac who insisted that he should meet Blair and the German chancellor, Gerhard Schröder, in a 'mini-summit' prior to the meeting of all EU heads of state and government held in Ghent in October 2001, provoking outrage amongst other EU leaders who were not invited to the cabal.

¹⁴This sentence is a composite of excerpts from actual commentaries that appeared in the French press in the month of October 2001.

¹⁵Quoted in Suzanne Daley, 'France upbraides U.S. as "simplistic"', *International Herald Tribune*, 7 February 2002. These comments are by no means inconsistent with views expressed in Hubert Védrine, *France in the age of globalization* (Washington, DC, 2001), 43–54.

¹⁶Quoted in 'Charlemagne: Michael Steiner', *The Economist*, 13 October 2001.

¹⁷See results of Sofres poll summarised in 'Europe and the United States: solid, but for how long?', *The Economist*, 22 September 2001.

shared Western values was that pluralities polled in France, Greece, Spain and Austria stated that US foreign policy had had a negative effect on their country. Much was made in the European press of the Bush administration's refusal of European offers of military assets, leaving the US to pursue the war in Afghanistan almost single-handedly (with some British support). However, whether domestic political support could have been sustained for the participation of any EU country besides the UK much beyond the point at which the Taliban government collapsed is far from clear.

Meanwhile, the importance of Brussels as a European political capital seemed to fade after the EU's initial display of solidarity. Rhetorically, at least, the declaration of support agreed by EU leaders ten days after 11 September was impressive.¹⁸ But the Ghent summit of late October 2001 was a disaster, with the Union appearing both marginalised and crippled by internal bickering. Small state leaders (with Prodi acting as their spokesman) complained bitterly about a pre-summit, *directoire*-type caucus convened by Chirac, Schröder and Blair. After the summit the UK, France and Germany all insisted that the Taliban government had to be toppled, thus effectively disowning a common EU declaration advising that the West should not impose a government on Afghanistan. Cracks reappeared in the EU's troika, with Prodi boycotting the summit press conference amidst complaints that Verhofstadt hogged the limelight with his long-winded remarks in three languages.¹⁹

However 'plaid' the European response, and despite claims of EU disunity, it can be argued that, in fact, European capitals sang broadly from the same hymn book on the issues that mattered most after 11 September, such as intelligence-sharing, police cooperation and rebuilding post-war Afghanistan. Brussels itself may have been marginalised, but Europe as a collection of states probably wielded more influence over US policy than would have been possible if Europe had acted exclusively via the EU. By way of illustration, the so-called 'bring your own bottle' dinner at Blair's Downing Street residence in early November 2001 was portrayed as a fiasco that underlined both Europe's divisions and the EU's irrelevance. Apparently undeterred by the fury provoked by the pre-Ghent 'mini-summit', Blair again invited Chirac and Schröder to meet to dine with him in London *à trois*. Eventually, a host of other EU leaders—including Verhofstadt, Berlusconi, Solana and the Spanish prime minister, José María Aznar, along with the Netherlands' Wim Kok—effectively gatecrashed the dinner or were invited after complaining about their exclusion.

Yet what mattered most about the meeting was its original purpose—to agree the essential points of a common European line ahead of Chirac's visit to Washington—and its success in agreeing such a line. The next day Chirac told George W. Bush that Europe stood firmly behind three basic positions. First, Europe would lend its support to the military campaign as long as it was limited to Afghanistan (in the absence of clear evidence of state support for terrorism from elsewhere), accompanied by a vigorous humanitarian aid effort and aimed towards a 'post-Taliban scenario' that would be agreed collectively by the Western allies. Second, the UN had to play a leading role in post-war Afghanistan. Third, an overarching Western policy objective had to be settlement of the dispute between Israel and Palestine, which was unimaginable without the engagement of the US. Reportedly, Chirac was extremely blunt in telling Bush that European public support for the war in Afghanistan was collapsing and opposition to it was mounting in the Middle East.

¹⁸See General Secretariat of the EU Council, 'Conclusions and plan of action of the Extraordinary European Council meeting on 21 September 2001', Brussels, SN 140/01 EN.

¹⁹David Cronin, 'Verhofstadt bid to heal rift with Prodi', *European Voice*, 25–31 October 2001.

The actual impact of the European line on American policy is, of course, difficult to judge, particularly as the Taliban regime in Afghanistan dissolved about a week later. However, the US military campaign (at least initially) remained confined to Afghanistan. Emergency aid efforts were stepped up. A post-Taliban scenario was agreed quickly, with a mainly European peacekeeping force an important element in it. The UN was given lead responsibility, against the instincts of many in the Bush administration, for organising an interim administration in Kabul. The Middle East crisis worsened, with the Bush administration showing little will to become engaged until Israel launched a brutal invasion of Palestinian towns and villages in April 2002, in response to seemingly endless and extremely bloody suicide bomb attacks within Israel by Palestinian militants. Even when Bush insisted that Israeli forces be withdrawn from Palestine immediately there was little perceptible impact on Israeli policy, thus exposing—to the astonishment of many in Washington—the limits of US influence on Israel. For their part, EU diplomats quietly stressed both the need for patience in relation to the Middle East and the lack of any quick solutions, regardless of how engaged the Americans were. But European pressure on the Bush administration to re-engage in the Middle East peace process was consistent and resolute, and led to a truly multilateral effort by a new diplomatic configuration—the ‘quartet’ (the US together with the UN, Russia and the EU)—to launch peace talks by mid-2002.²⁰

If the Downing Street dinner succeeded in agreeing a European line that carried weight in Washington, it also seemed to show that London—not Brussels—had become the locus for European policy-making, at least on this occasion. Though eager to describe himself as ‘pro-European’,²¹ Blair made virtually no concessions to Brussels along the lines of stepping aside to let Solana, Prodi or Verhofstadt present a truly common EU stance to Washington. Blair showed little sympathy for EU leaders of small states who complained of being cut out of decisions taken in mini-summits of the ‘big three’.²²

Yet the problem of the EU’s political immaturity on matters of foreign policy was never going to be ‘solved’ in some kind of shotgun agreement whereby European national capitals would exclusively agree and present policy in the war on terrorism

²⁰The quartet was cited frequently by Colin Powell as evidence of the Bush administration’s commitment to multilateralism. For example, see the interview with Powell published simultaneously in the *Guardian*, *NRC Handelsblad*, *Die Zeit* and *Libération* during the weekend of 18–19 May 2002. See also BBC news online, ‘EU pushes for Mid-East conference’, available at http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/english/world/middle_east/newsid_2021000/2021607.stm (2 June 2002); Fraser Cameron, ‘Utilitarian multilateralism: the implications of 11 September 2001 for US foreign policy’, *Politics* 22 (2) (2002) 68–75: 73.

²¹In some ways the zeal with which the Blair government sought to influence EU debates by being at the centre of them was made clear only three months later, when the foreign secretary, Jack Straw (formerly a committed Eurosceptic), unveiled the government’s proposals for reforming the Union’s institutions in the 2004 intergovernmental conference. See ‘Reforming Europe: new era, new questions’, speech by the foreign secretary, Jack Straw, at The Hague, 21 February 2002, available from <http://www.fco.gov.uk/news/speechtext.asp?5926> (22 February 2002).

²²Blair’s sensitivity towards small-state concerns about an emerging ‘*directoire*’ seemed to change after a visit from Austria’s chancellor, Wolfgang Schüssel, in November 2001. Schüssel apparently told Blair that most ordinary Austrians did not know the difference between the EU, the Group of 8, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe, etc., and that whenever they saw any European meeting covered in the media that did *not* include Austria, many became more sympathetic to the anti-European line of the far right Austrian Freedom Party (interviews in the British Cabinet Office and Foreign Office, January 2002). See also ‘Doorstep interview with the prime minister, Tony Blair and Chancellor Wolfgang Schüssel of Austria’, 16 November 2001, available at <http://www.number-10.gov.uk/output/page3883.asp> (24 May 2002).

via Brussels. Things might have been different in late 2001 if the UK or one of the other large member states had held the Council presidency, instead of Belgium, as the EU could have been used as a 'multiplier' of an already major state. Even so, it would have been difficult—and perhaps counterproductive—to try to make the aftermath of 11 September into the 'hour of Europe' and fundamentally shift American perceptions about the EU of the twenty-first century, for two basic reasons.

First, the Bush administration was still extremely young. It had been in power for barely six months, and many senior posts in the administration—including ones germane to the war on terrorism—were still unfilled because of earlier delays in confirming the result of the 2000 presidential election. Policy-makers in specialised, middle-ranking posts, of the kind most frequently unfilled in the US administration in September 2001, are usually the most centrally involved in exchanges with the EU. For their part, European policy-makers often find that it takes a considerable amount of time for their counterparts in Washington to learn to appreciate the virtues of the EU's low-key, patient external policy efforts. In particular, it takes time for non-EU officials to learn to live with what Bill Clinton's first ambassador to the EU described as the Union's 'creaky and complex decision-making process'.²³ Clearly, there was little time or inclination after 11 September for learning lessons about the importance of the EU and how it worked, and sometimes there was no US official in a given post to learn them.

In any event, there was no desire on the part of London or any large-state EU capital to invest in teaching such lessons. Perhaps Blair could have done more, with desirable effects on American policy, to underline publicly the importance of the EU as a political entity in the war on terrorism. Doing so might well have enhanced his own standing in Europe. Yet there is no denying that 'the substance of Britain's diplomacy—like that of the French and Germans—has generally been to promote the European interest'.²⁴ If Blair and other European leaders had tried to make the EU the exclusive institutional channel for Europe's contribution to the war on terrorism, it is likely that they would have fallen into the trap—yet again—of raising American expectations of the EU in excess of its capabilities.

The second reason why it might have been counterproductive to put the EU, as opposed to its member states, at the forefront of European diplomacy was strategic. Despite its youth the Bush administration had already shown itself to be very divided on most matters of foreign policy. Splits were obvious, even before 11 September, between moderates, such as Secretary of State Colin Powell (whose perspective on many issues seemed almost 'European'), and hard-liners, including Vice-President Dick Cheney, Assistant Secretary of Defence Paul Wolfowitz and Assistant Secretary of State Richard Armitage. The latter group instinctively seemed to wish to extend the US military campaign in Afghanistan to other states that harboured or supported terrorists—particularly Iraq, but even Syria.

In these circumstances Blair calculated that maximum traction in Washington could be had from showing complete solidarity with the Bush administration, and making few, if any, concessions to doubts about American policy elsewhere in Europe. Relying on his own political skills and close relationship with Bush, Blair effectively became the voice of Europe to the US administration. By no means did

²³Stuart Eizenstat, quoted in David Cronin, 'White House finds it difficult to focus on EU, says envoy', *European Voice*, 21–7 February 2002.

²⁴Charles Grant, 'A stronger European foreign and defence policy', in Bannerman *et al.*, *Europe after 11th September*, 31–48: 42.

everyone in EU diplomatic circles appreciate or support Blair's strategy. As the Belgian EU presidency of late 2001 became diplomatically marginalised, Michel bitterly accused Blair of 'grandstanding'.

Yet Blair emerged as more than just a spokesman for Europe, eventually becoming 'chief allied propagandist' in the war on terrorism, thus giving it at least a shroud of international legitimacy.²⁵ Risking diplomatic humiliation, and sometimes subjected to it, Blair bravely offered himself up to be interviewed by al-Jazeera, the independent Qatar-based television channel (commonly known as the 'CNN of the Middle East'), and also visited Syria, where he received a public dressing down from Crown Prince Assad. Later, it was Blair—rather than anyone in the Bush administration itself—who announced that evidence had been found that definitively linked Osama bin Laden to the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon.²⁶ In short, Blair became almost a swing vote *within* the Bush administration, not least because it was so split between hawks and doves in the first place.

More generally, what was revealed after 11 September was less the weakness of the EU as an institution than the (still) superior power of Europe as a collection of states on matters of high politics. In contrast to the Gulf War or the outbreak of hostilities in the former Yugoslavia, EU member states took pains after 11 September to coordinate their public statements closely, both with each other and with EU institutions. This time, really for the first time after a major international crisis, European states acted in concert with EU institutions, as opposed to working at cross purposes. To the extent that Europe influenced US policy in the early stages of the war on terrorism, the influence was collectively European.

2. WHAT HAS 'EUROPE' DONE?

In matters of foreign policy the EU is frequently accused of being incapable of much beyond 'declaratory diplomacy'. That is, the CFSP is about saying things, as opposed to doing things. In particular, the EU's inability to make hard decisions quickly—especially ones that require a military response—is exposed during times of crisis. Even before 11 September it was easy to argue that the CFSP—compared to the EU's trade, monetary and competition policies—'ha[d] only a marginal impact on transatlantic relations'.²⁷

After the experience of the wars in the Balkans in the 1990s, condemnation of the CFSP had become habitual in much of the European media. Thus, scathing commentary in the European press about the EU's perceived inability to act with unity or decisively after 11 September was unsurprising. The Italian broadsheet *Corriere della Sera* asserted that: 'This Europe is not a united continent...the Afghan crisis and Tony Blair's activities are mercilessly underscoring all the cracks in the Union and the paltry weight carried in real terms by the European Commission where foreign and defence policy are concerned.'²⁸ The German paper *Welt am*

²⁵See 'Britain, America and Europe: that very useful Tony Blair', *The Economist*, 20 October 2001.

²⁶This move assuaged fears within the Bush administration that if they themselves had made the announcement, the effect would have been to compromise US intelligence sources. See Warren Hoge, 'Blair says new evidence ties bin Laden to attacks', *New York Times*, 15 November 2001.

²⁷Jan Zielonka, 'Transatlantic relations beyond the CFSP', *The International Spectator* 35 (4) (2000), 27–40: 27.

²⁸*Corriere della Sera*, 12 November 2001, as translated by the BBC Monitoring Service, available from <http://www.monitor.bbc.co.uk> (13 November 2001).

Sonntag insisted that: ‘the EU does not have the strength to take action as a regional power “Europe”. Under the pressure of the international crisis, European states turn out to be the tough, although too small, centres of action...The EU has moved into the shadows’.²⁹ In fact, it was precisely in the ‘shadows’, away from the headlines, that the EU made its mark as a player—sometimes a major one—in the war on terrorism.

First, as Chris Patten argued tirelessly, the EU had a *common* foreign policy, and not a *single* foreign policy, and the difference mattered.³⁰ The CFSP was almost always subject to unanimous decision-making, thus inviting lowest-common-denominator agreements. However, the CFSP had become only one element—often not the most important one—in a more general EU foreign policy system.³¹ This system had evolved to the point where, usually, each member state and EU institution could play to its strengths and deliver what resources it had to a more or less common cause. Thus, as Blair and Chirac took the diplomatic lead in shaping US policy towards Afghanistan, the European Commission quickly began delivering by far the largest of any humanitarian aid contribution—more than 300 million worth—once the American military campaign began.

Second, it was clear that the EU was able to perform diplomatic tasks (many of which generated few headlines) that the US could not, and with more weight than any one EU member state could carry if it acted alone. Within days of 11 September the EU troika—Patten, Solana and Michel—had made diplomatic visits to Pakistan, Iran, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Syria. All were front-line states in the war on terrorism, but several were places where no American president could set foot any time in the foreseeable future. Iran, in particular, was a key focus of the war on terrorism.³² The EU pursued a bilateral trade and cooperation agreement with Iran (including a clause on human rights) to try to strengthen the position of Iranian moderates against hard-line Islamist mullahs. Meanwhile, Bush shocked many in European capitals by lumping Iran together with North Korea and Iraq in his ‘axis of evil’. The EU’s policy of engagement with Iran seemed to have far more constructive potential than the US policy of confrontation. More generally, it was clear that effective action against global terrorism was going to require an alliance of 50 or 60 states, including a number in which the EU was seen as a purveyor of multilateralism and tolerance while the US was viewed, deservedly or not, as a bully.

Third, after the astonishingly quick fall of Kabul in early 2002, when peacekeeping and reconstruction became Western priorities, Europe began to play to its strengths. The main Western peacekeeping force sent to Kabul was British-led and mostly European. So, eventually, was the force that undertook ‘Operation Anaconda’, the effort to pursue and destroy al-Qaeda forces in the mountains of southeastern Afghanistan, which lasted well into spring 2002 and stretched American forces in the region. The EU took the lead not only in delivering

²⁹Text of report on *Welt am Sonntag* web site, 11 November 2001, as translated by the BBC Monitoring Service, available from <http://www.monitor.bbc.co.uk> (13 November 2001).

³⁰Chris Patten, ‘In defence of Europe’s foreign policy’, *Financial Times*, 17 October 2001; Chris Patten, ‘Look again: the European Commission has been at work’, *International Herald Tribune*, 13 November 2001.

³¹For an accessible, serviceable analysis of this system, see Brian White, *Understanding European foreign policy* (Basingstoke and New York, 2001).

³²The US State Department’s 2002 analysis of global trends in terrorism singled out Iran as ‘the most active state sponsor of terrorism’. See US State Department, *Patterns of global terrorism 2001* (Washington, DC, May 2002), 64, available at <http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/pgtrpt/2001/pdf> (8 July 2002).

humanitarian aid, but also in planning for post-war reconstruction—a process about which it had learned valuable lessons in the Balkans.

In short, careful investigation of the question ‘what has Europe done?’ makes the portrayal of the EU as marginalised and discordant seem harsh, or at least simplistic. What’s more, the EU’s principal task in the war on terrorism was one that lay mostly ahead of it. As one analyst put it:

true statesmanship means transcending gut reactions and addressing the root causes of the problem. In Vietnam, a generation ago, the US attempted—inappropriately and futilely—to ‘win hearts and minds’. In the war on terrorism, by contrast, the winning of hearts and minds—particularly in the Islamic world—is crucial to the outcome.³³

Especially after Bush’s ‘axis of evil’ speech, the EU’s single most powerful asset in the war on terrorism seemed to be its clear comparative advantage, relative to the US, in building bridges to the Muslim world.

Moreover, Europe’s contribution to the war on terrorism had broader potential to galvanise the Union into living up to its potential as a global actor. Whether or not the EU was the primary channel through which policy was made and presented in the war on terrorism mattered far less than the basic fact that a common *European* line was maintained and supported by all EU institutions *and* national capitals. As one seasoned opinion leader put it:

The countries of Europe are united as never before. They are all behaving sensibly. They face an opportunity they’ve never previously seized to become, as a collective, a vital force in the politics of the world: and thereby to be not just a half-resentful accomplice of Washington but an equal allied partner in determining the conditions of future existence.³⁴

3. WHAT HAS 11 SEPTEMBER ‘DONE’ TO EUROPE?

The flip side to the ‘what has Europe done?’ question is, in many ways, even more interesting. Before 11 September the EU seemed to be stumbling towards enlargement, institutional reform and the launch of a single currency with timidity and little sense of purpose. Enlargement, after preoccupying the highest political levels in the mid-1990s, had become an ‘almost deceptively conventional process’.³⁵ Even as it promised to transform the EU, enlargement had been reduced to the slow, technical grind of ‘accession’ negotiations between applicant states and the Commission. Few doubted that radical reform of the EU’s institutions (extending to the CFSP) was needed to prevent gridlock after enlargement. A round of Treaty reforms—the EU’s fifth in seventeen years—was already on the cards for 2004. But the almost unbelievably convoluted results of the last set of reforms, manifest in the Treaty of Nice and rejected in Ireland’s June 2001 referendum, dimmed enthusiasm

³³Jolyon Howorth and Stanley R. Sloan, ‘Transatlantic foreign and defence policy cooperation’, in John Peterson and Mark Pollack (eds), *Europe, America, Bush: transatlantic relations in the 21st century* (London and New York, forthcoming [2003]).

³⁴Hugo Young, ‘Crisis is reshaping Europe as a vital force in the world’, *Guardian*, 18 September 2001.

³⁵Ulrich Sedelmeier and Helen Wallace, ‘Eastern enlargement: strategy or second thoughts’, in Helen Wallace and William Wallace (eds), *Policy-making in the European Union* (4th edn, Oxford, 2000), 427–60: 455.

for another round of bickering over the EU's architecture.³⁶ Meanwhile, as the launch date for the euro approached, horror stories abounded about what could go wrong: highway robberies, endless queues, consumer rip-offs etc.

It is possible that all three of these projects—enlargement, internal reform and the euro—would have been rejuvenated even if the terrorist atrocities in the US had never occurred. Six months on from 11 September plenty of uncertainty still surrounded all of them. Yet it was difficult to argue that European integration as a political project had not been given a perceptible shove during this period.

The effects were most visible in the area of enlargement. By mid-2001 the accepted wisdom in Brussels was that perhaps a handful of applicant states might join by 2004. By November it was clear that, barring any last-minute hitches, at least ten new states would join the EU within three years. Admittedly, the Commission's annual progress report on the accession negotiations (delivered in November) showed that most applicants had made more progress towards meeting EU administrative and legal standards in the previous year than could have been expected. But after 11 September enlargement effectively became a political process again. The effect was to encourage EU governments to be more outward-looking and open to radical solutions on all questions related to security, including enlargement, border controls and European defence.

New thinking on enlargement had powerful knock-on effects for institutional reform. The December 2001 Laeken summit declared that 'the Union stands at a crossroads, a defining moment in its existence'. It agreed to appoint former French president Valéry Giscard-d'Estaing (with two former European prime ministers as his deputies) to head a 'Convention on the Future of Europe', which was charged with drawing up a constitutional blueprint for the EU. Regardless of what the convention produced and how seriously it was taken by EU governments (which remained the supreme 'masters of the Treaty'), a palpable and shared sense of mission began to grip European capitals. With any future round of Treaty reform, post-2004, almost certain to require unanimous agreement by as many as 25 different member states, and with the Irish experience of Nice still fresh in mind, the 2004 intergovernmental conference became viewed as a final, high-stakes chance to reform the EU. Despite the usual rivalries between alternative reform proposals, minds became concentrated as never before on the practicalities of how to make the EU work better, as opposed simply to maximising national advantage.³⁷

As for the launch of the euro, the transition from national 'legacy currencies' to euro notes and coins could almost not have gone more smoothly. Far more important than the short-term boost to the EU's self-confidence, however, were three broader political effects of the successful roll-out of the euro. One was to make Eurozone membership a more likely prospect much sooner for the UK, with obvious and significant economic ramifications for citizens on either side of the border between the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland.³⁸ A second effect was to insulate

³⁶See Wolfgang Wessels, 'Nice treaty: the millennium IGC in the EU's evolution', *Journal of Common Market Studies* 39 (2) (2001), 197–219.

³⁷The main alternative proposals were the Blair government's blueprint for reform, which featured a powerful new EU president to act as the head of its Council of Ministers (and was backed by France, Spain and Giscard-d'Estaing), and a Commission proposal featuring a far more powerful role for the EU's executive civil service, particularly in foreign policy.

³⁸Arguably, a breakthrough occurred well before the launch of the euro, when Blair told the Labour Party conference (three weeks after 11 September) that if the government's economic conditions for UK membership were met, 'we should join, and if met in this Parliament, we should have the courage of our argument, to ask the British people for their consent in this Parliament'. See 'The power of

France's economy from market panic after the far-right candidate, Jean-Marie Le Pen, advanced to the second round of the presidential election in spring 2002: it was widely thought that the old French franc would have lost nearly 40% of its value if it had still been France's currency. A third effect was that the euro not only subjected the European private sector to stiffer competition (through more transparent price competition) but also exposed national regulatory barriers to competition in the single market. The so-called Lisbon process, launched in spring 2000 with the aim of giving the EU 'the most dynamic economy in the world', had already put the EU in pursuit of a wide range of economic reforms. The global economic downturn that followed 11 September, and then coincided with the launch of the euro, gave European leaders incentives to deliver on what had become a dormant, if often radical, agenda of economic reforms.³⁹

Moreover, the war on terrorism gave powerful new impetus to integration in two relatively young EU policy sectors. First, the Union's justice and home affairs (JHA) agenda was given a spectacular push by 11 September. The EU quickly approved a common definition of what constitutes a terrorist act and a common European arrest warrant. These agreements were all the more impressive given the paucity of prior progress on JHA policy, even though it had become the EU's most important growth area in terms of policy activity.⁴⁰ After 11 September it was clearer than ever before that a Europe without internal borders (especially one enlarged to the EU's east and south) meant that each state's weakness in internal security was equal to the weakness of the weakest link. Closer cooperation on JHA became viewed as a vital necessity, even by member governments that had previously resisted stronger EU powers in the sector.⁴¹

Second, 11 September gave a fillip to the construction of a European security and defence policy (ESDP). By no means was this effect as visible or as immediate as it was in the case of JHA policy. In fact, the decision of European leaders at the December 2001 Laeken summit to declare the ESDP 'operational' seemed like a typical piece of EU-style wishful thinking. Leading defence experts judged the Union to be years behind in its plans to have a standing Rapid Reaction Force of 60,000 troops by 2003.⁴² The EU's declared willingness to take over 'Operation Amber Fox', a peacekeeping mission in Macedonia, after NATO's mandate expired in mid-2002 seemed to be another example of the EU pretending that the ESDP was far more developed than it really was.

community can change the world', speech by Tony Blair, prime minister, Labour Party conference, Brighton 2001, available at <http://www.labour.org.uk/lp/new/labour/docs/LONGSPEECHES/TBCONFSPREECH2001.TXT> (27 February 2002).

³⁹For example, even before the German election and the French legislative election in 2002, EU finance ministers appeared poised to agree a major directive on pensions reform, crucial to the goal of a single market in financial services, by 2005. See Francesco Guerrera and George Parker, 'Finance ministers set to agree EU pensions reform', *Financial Times*, 30 May 2002.

⁴⁰Monica den Boer and William Wallace, 'Justice and home affairs', in Wallace and Wallace, *Policy making in the EU*, 493–519.

⁴¹To illustrate the point: after previously resisting fiercely the idea that qualified majority voting should be extended to JHA policy, the UK's Blair government explicitly advocated such a shift ahead of the 2004 intergovernmental conference. See Straw, 'Reforming Europe'.

⁴²For example, Klaus Naumann, formerly the top German military commander and chair of the NATO Military Committee, judged the EU to be at least five years away from being able to mount a credible Rapid Reaction Force. In particular, Germany's military was in urgent need of reform if its contribution was ever to be anything close to being on a par with those of France or the UK. See Dennis Abbott, 'EU's 2003 military goal is still five years away, says Naumann', *European Voice*, 21–7 February 2002.

Nonetheless, the Bush administration clearly expected the EU eventually to take something close to full responsibility for peacekeeping and policing in the Balkans. Powell continued to parrot the line that US and European forces had 'gone in together' to restore and keep peace in ex-Yugoslavia, and would 'come out together'. However, it was no secret that the Bush administration wished to withdraw American forces from the region as soon as possible. The imperatives of the war on terrorism—particularly the perceived need to prepare for the possibility of an attack on Iraq in early 2003—gave this ambition political cover. The Spanish EU presidency of early 2002 urged that the Union needed to start planning for Balkan peacekeeping on its own, especially given how ill-prepared it was to take on the task. Just as the EU's defence ambitions were given a major stimulus by the exposure of Europe's military weakness in the Kosovo campaign, it was likely that European governments would be forced to take difficult and expensive decisions to upgrade their militaries by the knock-on effects of the war on terrorism on peacekeeping in the Balkans.

Six months on from 11 September it was still possible to debate whether Europe had emerged as more politically united or, on the contrary, whether new divisions had actually been exposed, especially between large and small states, and between major European powers and the EU itself. When Europe appeared powerful after 11 September, it was as a group of states speaking and acting together, as opposed to a federal-style institution whose supranational leaders wielded more clout than national ones. Still, it seemed likely that 11 September would be seen by future historians as a defining moment in the EU's existence, when Europe finally began to grow up into something like *une Europe de la puissance* in international politics.⁴³

4. INTERNATIONAL ORDER AFTER 11 SEPTEMBER

After the election of George W. Bush, and before 11 September 2001, the idea that the US and Europe were 'headed for divorce' became almost a mainstream view amongst pundits.⁴⁴ Transatlantic firefights raged on a range of issues including the Kyoto Protocol, missile defence, the International Criminal Court, the treatment of 'rogue states', and the Middle East. In no sense did 11 September eliminate tensions arising from these and other US–European disputes (such as that over steel) in the months that followed. Yet the broader question of whether the war on terrorism had the effect of 'reuniting' Europe and America, while elevating the importance of basic, shared cultural values, assumed new salience.

More broadly, developments after 11 September offered a new testing ground for debates about how much the international order of the early twenty-first century represented continuity or change from the Cold War order. On one side of the debate, a diverse collection of analysts assumed that international relations had changed fundamentally after 1989, or 'year zero' in the memorable phrase of Francis Fukuyama.⁴⁵ This pole united euphoric liberals such as Fukuyama⁴⁶ with committed

⁴³For one of the most stimulating contributions to debates about the EU's difficulties in translating its economic might into international political power, see Nicole Gnesotto, *La puissance et l'Europe* (Paris, 1998).

⁴⁴Ivo Daalder, 'Are the United States and Europe heading for divorce?', *International Affairs* 77 (3) (2001), 553–67. In fact, numerous predictions of a looming transatlantic rupture pre-dated Bush's election. See, for example, David Pryce-Jones, 'Bananas are the beginning: the looming war between America and Europe', *National Review*, 5 April 1999; Stephen M. Walt, 'The ties that fray', *The National Interest* 54 (winter 1998–9), 3–11.

⁴⁵Francis Fukuyama, *The end of history and the last man* (London, 1992).

⁴⁶This characterisation of Fukuyama may reflect widely held perceptions, but it is arguably unfair

doom-mongers, such as Robert Kaplan and John Mearsheimer, as well as others, such as Samuel Huntington, who fell somewhere in between on the optimism–pessimism continuum.⁴⁷ While agreeing on little else, all assumed fundamental differences between the Cold War and post-Cold War orders. Take, for example, Huntington's claim that the international system had become multipolar and multicivilisational for the first time in history after the demise of the Soviet Union.⁴⁸ Consider Fukuyama's proclamation of the 'end of history' and forecast of an end to significant international conflict.⁴⁹ Or reflect on Mearsheimer's contention that US-led alliance structures constructed during the Cold War were 'not sustainable for much longer'.⁵⁰ While sometimes painting very different pictures of the global system, many perceptive students of international politics were united in assuming that the system was fundamentally different after 1989 from what it was before.

On the other side of the debate, rivals to the 'year zero' school held that there were more lines of continuity than of change in the transition from the international system of the 1980s to that of the 1990s. For John Ikenberry, Ian Clark, Joseph Nye, Jr, and others, the world of the 1940s was ratified far more than it was transformed by end of Cold War.⁵¹ Many of the global system's most important features, such as robust international institutions, remained intact. The durability of the system was in large measure a product of the self-sustaining nature of two bargains, originally struck in the early post-war period, which underpinned the international order. The first was a 'realist' one: the US would offer security and access to its large economic market in exchange for diplomatic support for a system that featured the projection of American power far from its shores, above all to counter the Soviet threat. The second was a liberal one: based on reciprocity, with each individual unit or state (including the US) binding itself to a fundamentally liberal international order and the disciplines that it imposed. At the core of both bargains was a European–American compact and 'strategic restraint' on the part of the US.⁵²

The events of 11 September sternly tested these rival perspectives. In its liberal-optimistic version the 'year zero' paradigm seemed bankrupt: instead of the predicted spread of peaceful, liberal internationalism, the 'end of history' yielded intense hatred of America and Western commercialism amongst the world's disaffected. In its more pessimistic guises the paradigm assumed that the transatlantic alliance had become brittle and was likely to crack, even before it became subject to new strains arising from the war on terrorism. In particular, a

given his warnings in *The end of history* about the gradual demise of democratic societies (arising from the lack of any alternative model to which they might be compared), and his (later) warning that 'the tendency of contemporary liberal democracies to fall prey to excessive individualism is perhaps their greatest long-term vulnerability'. See Francis Fukuyama, *The great disruption: human nature and the reconstitution of social order* (London, 1999), 10.

⁴⁷See Robert Kaplan, *The coming anarchy: shattering the dreams of the post Cold War* (New York, 2000); John J. Mearsheimer, *The future of the American pacifier* (New York, 2001); Samuel R. Huntington, *The clash of civilizations and the remaking of world order* (London, 1997).

⁴⁸Huntington, *The clash of civilizations*, 21 and *passim*.

⁴⁹Fukuyama, *The end of history*. Again, this may be oversimplifying Fukuyama's argument, but it is widely held to be his argument. See, for example, Huntington, *The clash of civilizations*, 31.

⁵⁰John J. Mearsheimer, 'The future of the American pacifier', *Foreign Affairs* 80 (5) (2001), 46–61: 47.

⁵¹Ian Clark, *The post-Cold War order: the spoils of peace* (Oxford, 2001); G. John Ikenberry, *After victory: institutions, strategic restraint and the rebuilding of order after major wars* (Princeton and Oxford, 2001); Joseph S. Nye, Jr, *The paradox of American power: why the world's only superpower can't go it alone* (Oxford, 2002).

⁵²See Ikenberry, *After victory*, esp. chaps 6–7.

much-repeated media characterisation after 11 September was that a true 'clash of civilisations' loomed between the West and Islam, but with the US and Europe unlikely to be able to agree on how to respond to international Islamist terrorism.

In contrast, the 'durability' school viewed the war on terrorism, and the powerful, functional pressures for international cooperation to which it gave rise, as acting to make the international order a more self-sustaining formation, which regulated the behaviour of even the most powerful players. A European–American compact remained at the core of the international system, particularly given the emergence of the EU as a foreign policy actor and the uninterrupted trend towards ever more transatlantic economic interdependence.⁵³ The international order could *not* be viewed as being sustained by the US alone. On the contrary, the existing order was highly resistant to transformation by unilateral American behaviour and had strong disciplinary effects on US foreign policy.

At times, functional pressures for cooperation in the aftermath of 11 September seemed relatively weak. It was possible to view the American military action in Afghanistan as a basic act of unilateralism, especially as most European offers of troops or other resources were initially turned down. Bush's 'axis of evil' speech seemed to signal the beginning of an inexorable drift towards extending the war on terrorism to Iraq, in defiance of warnings from Europe and elsewhere.

Yet not long after the war in Afghanistan started the EU was thrust into a lead role in the Western humanitarian aid and post-war reconstruction efforts. The main Western peacekeeping force in Afghanistan was led by and (mostly) composed of Europeans.⁵⁴ Bush appeared keen to row back from the rhetoric of his 'axis of evil' speech after it was criticised with brutal frankness by Patten and others.⁵⁵ With al-Qaeda and other Islamist terrorist groups still operating from more than 50 different states, the need for cooperation with European and other allies was blindingly obvious. Even those who advocated, say, a full-scale invasion of Iraq acknowledged that disabling al-Qaeda 'cannot be done without the active cooperation of scores of US allies around the world—for intelligence gathering, policy work, and financial cooperation, all on top of any military or diplomatic help that might be required'.⁵⁶ When Bush met European leaders in Washington for the annual US–EU summit in May 2002 he cited cooperation with Europe in the war on terrorism as a model for solving intense transatlantic trade wars over steel and US tax treatment of exports: 'we must bring the same spirit of co-operation to our common economic agenda'.⁵⁷

⁵³See Nye, *The paradox of American power*, 29–35; John Peterson, 'Get away from me closer, you're near me too far: Europe and America after the Uruguay Round', in Mark A. Pollack and Gregory C. Shaffer (eds), *Transatlantic governance in the global economy* (Lanham, Md., 2001), 45–72.

⁵⁴In fact, five soldiers from EU states (Germany and Denmark) were killed within days of separate incidents that cost the lives of eight US soldiers in early March 2002. An American-led offensive against regrouped Taliban and al-Qaeda fighters at this point featured contributions from France, Germany, Denmark, Norway and the UK.

⁵⁵See Chris Patten, 'Jaw-jaw, not war-war', *Financial Times*, 15 February 2002; Richard Wolffe, 'Bush pulls back from rhetoric on "axis of evil"', *Financial Times*, 19 February 2002.

⁵⁶Kenneth M. Pollack, 'Next stop Baghdad?', *Foreign Affairs* 81 (2), 32–47: 46. This author, who served on the National Security Council under the Clinton administration, insists that 'it is a mistake to think of operations against Iraq as part of the war on terrorism', as Iraq is a far less important state sponsor of terrorism than many other states. The essential problem is Iraq's effort to acquire weapons of mass destruction.

⁵⁷Quoted in Edward Alden and Richard Wolffe, 'Bush seeks to defuse EU trade row', *Financial Times*, 3 May 2002.

Regardless of continuing allegations of the EU's weakness in both the European and (especially) the US press,⁵⁸ the Union was revealed as an essential player in the international effort against terrorism. Speaking before the EU's Political and Security Committee, the State Department's senior counter-terrorism official made clear in late January 2002 that the next steps in the war on terrorism had to be intelligence sharing and much closer financial cooperation; that is, civilian-led, EU-style policy tasks that NATO—lacking any central intelligence gathering service or counter-terrorism unit—simply could not handle. Just over three months later the EU for the first time froze the assets of non-European terrorist organisations in a move closely coordinated with (and wholeheartedly welcomed by) the Bush administration.⁵⁹

The school that sees the post-Cold War order as, in key respects, an extension of the Cold War order is perhaps most persuasive when it argues that American unilateralism is extremely costly in terms of system management. In other words, the ability of the US to shape international outcomes and project its power internationally declines when it loses the willing cooperation of its closest allies. The problem, of course, is the time lag between unilateral action today and costs that may not appear until tomorrow. In this context the most committed unilateralists in the Bush administration were by most accounts rarely hesitant in internal policy debates to argue that 'we should do what we want and accept no international agreements that bind our hands—and if the rest of the world doesn't like it, what are they going to do about it?'.⁶⁰ Apparently, this question tended to end many foreign policy debates in Washington, DC, before 11 September.

After that day it became difficult to imagine that any event in American history, past or future, could demonstrate with any more force or clarity how much of a stake America had in system management. Equally, it became difficult to see how America's vulnerability could be reduced through isolationism, or indeed unilateralism. With international terrorist networks extending globally, security from further terrorist attacks seemed possible—if possible at all—only through a careful courting of America's present circle of allies, and moreover, through an expansion of that circle to transform states that were once part of the problem into parts of the solution. And it was difficult to see how any of this was possible without, first, carefully courting Europe, and second, working with the EU to extend and embed multilateralism in the international order.

CONCLUSION

For many, the post-Cold War period 'ended' on 11 September. A new era, still unnamed and unknown but certainly far less secure or benevolent, was emerging to

⁵⁸A good example is Geoff Winestock, 'Dialogue with the deaf', *Wall Street Journal*, 22 February 2002, which offers a scathing critique of the EU's foreign policy. For a European view along the same lines, see Roy Denman, 'Blair should fold his flying circus', *International Herald Tribune*, 9–10 February 2002.

⁵⁹As a caveat, and a sign of the EU's self-assertiveness, the Union refused to freeze the accounts of Hezbollah, the Lebanese militant group, and Hamas, the Palestinian group linked to attacks against Israel, on the grounds that a clear distinction had to be made between legitimate political organisations and violent militants. See European Commission, 'Fight against terrorism—updated list annexed—decision adopted by written procedure', Press release, Brussels, 3 May 2002—Press:121 Nr: 8549/02 (available from <http://ue.eu.int/newsroom/>).

⁶⁰Here I borrow from a presentation made by G. John Ikenberry to the British International Studies Association in Edinburgh on 19 December 2001.

replace it. Pundits and academics immediately rushed to debate whether the attacks on the Twin Towers and the Pentagon meant that everything about international politics had changed, or whether international politics had simply reverted to a time-honoured tradition of war and reprisal.⁶¹ Regardless of where one stood on the question of what and how much changed on 11 September, one could not avoid taking a position about the nature and durability of the transatlantic alliance.

One view was that 'one more victim will be added to the toll of September eleventh: the future of the [transatlantic] alliance itself'.⁶² According to this view, the security partnership was dead or dying: Europe's militaries had fallen a full generation behind that of the US, which by the early twenty-first century was spending ten times more on defence than the second highest spending NATO ally (the UK). The EU's defence policy was unlikely ever to amount to much, and the record of the CFSP showed why. Even if the EU had embraced enlargement and successfully launched the euro, and even if it eventually embraced radical institutional reform, 'in no way did any of these changes seriously impinge on the basics of power in the larger international system'.⁶³ Meanwhile, the reluctance of European states to extend the war on terrorism to Iraq and elsewhere revealed them as fickle allies who would happily shelter behind American security guarantees without contributing on equal terms to an effort to eliminate security threats to the West. Besides, there was the 'what are they going to do about it?' question. Those who asked it assumed that the Europeans would always, in the end, fall in line behind American policy, because Europe, either collectively or as individual states, lacked the power and unity to challenge American leadership. Meanwhile, despite hopes that the war on terrorism 'would curb the unilateralist inclinations of the Bush administration', some claimed that 'the war ha[d] had almost the opposite effect'.⁶⁴ As for the future, the transatlantic relationship might remain, in some respects, an 'alliance'. But American power was so overwhelming and unchallenged, it hardly mattered whether it atrophied into something less than that.

An alternative view emphasised, along with George W. Bush (and Donald Rumsfeld⁶⁵), that the war on terrorism was not a war in the traditional sense, in that policing, financial measures and intelligence-sharing were its central weapons and perhaps more central than military power. The war would not produce results quickly or easily. As shown in Afghanistan, it would involve persuasion as much as threats. Winning the war would require patience and, above all, effective actions in parts of the world where America's leverage and influence were minimal.

Patient, relentless, effective efforts in the war on terrorism had to be underpinned by public support for the 'war effort'. In this context, polls suggested that Americans reacted to the events of 11 September by embracing measurably more internationalist attitudes. Of course, it was possible that the terrorist attacks were so

⁶¹See, in particular, Nye, *The paradox of American power*; Michael Cox, 'American power before and after 11 September: dizzy with success?', *International Affairs* 78 (2) (2002), 261–76; Strobe Talbott and Nayan Chanda (eds), *The age of terror: America and the world after September 11* (New Haven and Oxford, 2002).

⁶²Special report—America and Europe: who needs whom', *The Economist*, 9–15 March 2002. As Bush toured Europe in May 2002 one poll showed that clear majorities of European citizens (except in Italy) viewed Bush negatively and (everywhere including Italy) saw the 11 September attacks as being directed at the US, as opposed to the 'Western world' more generally. See 'Chilly in the West, warmer in the East', *The Economist*, 25 May 2002.

⁶³Cox, 'American power before and after 11 September', 267.

⁶⁴Cox, 'American power before and after 11 September', 276.

⁶⁵Quoted in Cameron, 'Utilitarian multilateralism', 71.

shocking as to distort the way that American reported on their opinions. Moreover, very severe gaps persisted between perceptions in the US and those elsewhere, including Europe, about questions including whether past US policies contributed to the rise of international terrorism, whether the war on terrorism should be extended to Iraq, and the extent to which the US acted unilaterally in the aftermath of 11 September.⁶⁶ Yet there was also clear reason to believe that '[h]aving convinced the American people that the war against terrorism will require a team effort, the [Bush] administration may find it hard to go it alone at a later date'.⁶⁷ Having insisted that a broad international coalition was needed to fight terrorism, it was difficult to see how the Bush administration could then shift towards a bull-headed unilateralism that left the US isolated and without allies.

Thus, the most essential analytical puzzle about transatlantic relations is explaining why Europe and America often appear so divided but nearly always respond, in the end, to functional, systemic pressures that push them towards cooperation. One credible explanation is that differing and incompatible conceptions of sovereignty on either side of the Atlantic complicate but, ultimately, do not preclude US–European cooperation.⁶⁸ For its part, the EU has developed into a polity that is based, internally, on a unique brand of limited and pooled sovereignty. Gradually, it has become able to develop relatively autonomous (from the US) and sometimes influential positions on external political issues. It has thus become a model, in some respects, for troubled regions of the world, such as the Balkans or southern Africa, where elites aspire both to resolve their cross-national conflicts and to wield international power. In some respects, ten years of trying to make the much-maligned CFSP work has allowed the EU to build up a reservoir of core competencies (mostly in the EU's Council General Secretariat⁶⁹) that give the Union a better chance of unity and effective influence every time an international crisis arises.

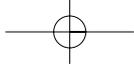
Meanwhile, the US—which has traditionally rejected a unitary form of internal sovereignty in favour of a staunchly decentralised federalism—has shifted towards acting on the basis of a very traditional conception of external sovereignty. That is, the US pursues purely national interests, the idea of pooling sovereignty in international organisations is eschewed and all alliances are temporary ones. Meanwhile, it is often claimed that the disparity between American power and that of other leading powers has widened to a distance unseen since imperial Rome. Thus, the US could be viewed as being structurally less predisposed to multilateralism than at any time in its history.

⁶⁶See the poll of global opinion leaders published in December 2001 by the Pew Research Centre as part of its 'global attitudes' project. While 70% of American opinion leaders said they thought the US was acting multilaterally in the war on terrorism, only 33% of their European counterparts agreed. Strikingly, no less than 66% of European opinion leaders said they thought that the public sentiment in their country held that it was good for the US to know what it was like to be vulnerable. See 'America admired, yet its new vulnerability seen as good thing, say opinion leaders', available at www.people-press.org/reports/display.php3?ReportID=145 (19 January 2002).

⁶⁷Kenneth M. Pollack, 'Hard times and hard policies', a commentary on the findings of a Pew Research Centre poll on pre- and post-11 September public attitudes in the US. The commentary is available (as a PDF) at http://www.cfr.org/Public/pdf/Pew_ForeignPolicy.pdf (8 August 2002).

⁶⁸Here I paraphrase the perceptive argument developed in Robert O. Keohane, 'Ironies of sovereignty: the European Union and world order', *Journal of Common Market Studies* 40 (4) (2002), forthcoming.

⁶⁹On the Council Secretariat and its role in the CFSP, see Fiona Hayes-Renshaw, 'The Council of Ministers', in John Peterson and Michael Shackleton (eds), *The institutions of the European Union* (Oxford, 2002), 47–70; Knud Erik Jørgensen, 'Making the CFSP work', in Peterson and Shackleton, *Institutions of the European Union*, 210–32.



Alternatively, it might be argued that the US faces a situation much like it faced in 1945, when its international power was unchallenged and unfettered. The only difference is that since 1945 it has embedded itself in a dense web of international organisations and obligations from which it cannot now escape easily or cleanly. It is possible to endorse either one of these views, while still accepting that Europe has entered a new era in the development of a truly common foreign policy, and that its impact on the global order will increase, regardless of what the US chooses to do about it.

