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The Atlantic Alliance Is in Good Hands

Henry Kissinger's op-ed piece of Aug. 16 argues that Clinton administration policies are eroding the Atlantic alliance and turning NATO into an empty shell. The usually astute Kissinger is wrong this time, but he does raise important issues about the altered security landscape in post-Cold War Europe, the principles that should guide U.S. policy there and what alternative policies might be adopted. The principles of the Clinton administration are in fact sensible, and its policies have worked rather well.

The basic issue in Europe is how to maintain, adapt and augment the essential institutions of transatlantic security—most of all NATO but also the European Union and its adjuncts—to the changed situation in Central and Eastern Europe, in Russia and the other states of the former Soviet Union. None of us, not even my friend Henry Kissinger, can be certain where Russia's evolution will take it in the spectrum ranging from a large but peaceful member of a cooperative international security order to a resurgent and expansionist state seeking to dominate its neighborhoods politically or even to incorporate some of them.

Taking Exception

The Atlantic alliance—and the United States, as its leader—should follow is to be prepared politically and militarily to oppose and deter an expansionist Russia should it develop, while avoiding actions that unduly increase the likelihood that it will. Most Central European and former Soviet nations also face alternative paths: toward Western values and practices or toward authoritarianism, statism and poisonous nationalism.

The balance for U.S. policy is not easy to strike, especially in dealing with the Central European states, whose history and geography—between Germany and Russia—do not, to put it mildly, make them naturally secure. The Bush administration, which commendably handled the events of the unification of Germany and the collapse of the Soviet Union, never faced up to the issue of post-Cold War security relations east of the new German border. President Clinton has taken the initiative in addressing both that issue and those of NATO structure and the alliance role in and beyond Europe.

At the NATO summit last January, Clinton noted that NATO's role is critical in the task of extending security eastward to the new democracies. With U.S. leadership, NATO moved to do so through the Partnership for Peace, which gives members and potential members the chance for practical experience in military cooperation without waiting to resolve the debate over NATO expansion. It tailors the relationship with NATO to the condition of each of the partners, thus avoiding the premature drawing of new lines.

Russia is a partner, though it will not, in my view, ever become a NATO member. The administration has rightly been ambiguous on that question, but as Clinton stressed in Warsaw, Russia will not have the right to veto, compromise or threaten the integration of any of the new democracies into Western institutions, including NATO.

Speaking to the Polish parliament only 7 days ago, Clinton explicitly rejected a "gray zone" of uncertain security for Central Europe's new democracies and affirmed that NATO's expansion was no longer a question of "whether" but of "when" and "how." The nature and timing of that expansion are appropriately left open because they should depend on the evolution of events.

Kissinger's article does not make his position clear, but those who argue that the "when" and "how" are full and immediate NATO membership should say for which nations those conditions apply, and explain their confidence that the U.S. Congress, the parliaments of the 15 other NATO members and the NATO publics are prepared to extend credible guarantees to the newcomers that an attack on one is an attack on all. They should also explain what effect the drawing of such a line would have on the relations between Russia and the other nations on the far side of that line.

NATO membership should not be automatic for any country. Democracy, a market economic system and a responsible security policy are appropriate criteria. How and when to expand, how to expand to some "partners" and not others and NATO's relations with non-member partners through and beyond a transition will need to be worked out in the context of events.

That context will include the economic relationship of Central Europe to the European Union. For the next few years at least, the political evolution and the security of Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic and Slovakia depend most of all on their internal stability and in turn on their economic progress. The most important external influence on that progress is the acceptance, first of their products and then of their membership, by the European Union.

The wisest U.S. policy is one that combines initiative and insurance. A revival of Russian expansionism is surely discouraged by Russian knowledge that it would result in a new Cold War in circumstances far less favorable to Russia than prevailed in the struggle that had such catastrophic consequences for it. But more insurance is needed, and it is provided by the U.S. commitment to European security, evidenced by the continuation of a 100,000-strong U.S. military presence in Europe and reaffirmed in two Clinton budgets. The initiative, and considerable flexibility, is provided by the Partnership for Peace. Clinton's $100 million-for-partnership initiatives is a significant down payment of resources to support the cooperation of NATO and Partner militaries.

Both initiative and insurance are evidenced by U.S. cooperation in strengthening the European pillar of NATO in the form of the Western European Union and of the Eurocorps (the Bush administration's negative treatment of which upset U.S. relations with France and Germany). And two U.S. initiatives during the past 18 months—joining with Russia in converting fissionable material from weapons in Russia and Ukraine to peaceful uses, and encouraging Russian participation at G-7 meetings—are examples of incentives for Russia to choose a cooperative path, including membership in the partnership.

On the central issue of transatlantic and European security, the Clinton administration has done quite well; it need not apologize to its predecessors or to the American people.

The writer, secretary of defense in the Carter administration, is a partner in a venture banking firm.
world leaders are in Moscow.

Kovalyov, a Soviet-era human rights activist who spent 10 years in prison, was elected to the Russian Parliament in 1990 and served as chairman of its Human Rights Committee.

Later, Yeltsin appointed him chairman of the President's Human Rights Commission and Parliament elected him to the separate post of Russian human rights commissioner. Parliament ousted him from the human rights post in March to punish him for his anti-war activities.

NATO Gets Bogged Down in Bosnia By Art Pine and Tyler Marshall= (c) 1995, Los Angeles Times=

BRUSSELS, Belgium. But if NATO's new mission is that of a supra-regional peace-enforcement agency, its first attempt at such a task in the former Yugoslav federation, has produced some worrisome results.

To be sure, parts of the operation, such as last year's successful attack against the Serbian jets over northern Bosnia, have been impressive. Technically and organizationally, the meshing of nearly 4,500 personnel from NATO member countries to keep the Serbian air force on the ground, provide close air support for U.N. peacekeepers and conduct punitive air strikes, has also worked well.

Politically and militarily, however, Bosnia has been a debacle for NATO.

Within months of its involvement, NATO had squandered valuable credibility and found itself either at odds with itself internally or paralyzed by the United Nations, whose peacekeeping operation it was supposed to be supporting.

Differences both within NATO and with the United Nations over the use of allied air power have gradually neutralized its impact in Bosnia. Nearly six months have passed since the last air strike there.

Despite these problems, alliance insiders insist they have learned from their mistakes in the Balkans, such as agreeing to a joint command system with the United Nations.

The alliance has just completed detailed contingency planning to rescue the 24,000 U.N. peacekeepers from the former Yugoslavia if the U.N. Security Council orders a withdrawal. This time, NATO officials claim, they have insisted upon and been granted full command of the operation by the United Nations.

NATO: Time to Let It Go or Let It Grow? By Art Pine and Tyler Marshall= (c) 1995, Los Angeles Times=

"Institutions founder on their victories."

Baron Montesquieu=

BRUSSELS, Belgium. It was over in 19 minutes, and from the time it began with a blip on an allied plane's radar at 6:31 a.m. to the destruction of the last of four intruding aircraft at 6:50 a.m., it was a perfect mission.

But it was also much more.

The incident, which unfolded early last year over northern Bosnia-Hercegovina, marked the first offensive action taken by NATO in its near-half-century history.

The attacking planes were two American F-16 fighters, although they could well have been Dutch, British, Spanish, Turkish or French aircraft, which operate under the same command. The radar aircraft was American-made but flown by a mixed crew. The pre-y Serbian light attack aircraft brazen enough to challenge the "no-fly" zone over Bosnia never stood a chance.

The attack stands as a rare example of the collective military muscle the alliance can muster. It also stands as one of the few bright moments in NATO's otherwise star-crossed venture in the Balkans.

"For the future, we have to do better," NATO secretary-general Willy Claes confided to a gathering of defense experts in Munich, Germany, earlier this year.

In many ways, the Bosnia experience reflects both the potential and the dangers of a post-Cold War world for the most powerful, most enduring, most successful military alliance the United States has ever been a part of.

Since its formation in 1949, the alliance has grown far beyond its primary mission of shielding the democracies of Western Europe from Soviet aggression. It has evolved into a model of military cooperation among its 16 member states and stands as the backbone of America's relationship with the Old World.

It has also become a valuable platform where like-minded countries can discuss complex security issues ranging from terrorism to nuclear proliferation.

"NATO is the only forum we have for things like that," said Francois Heisbourg, a French defense industry executive and a respected European voice on security issues.

Still, the enormity of political change that has swept through Europe since the fall of the Berlin Wall has placed the very future of the alliance in question.

With the communist threat gone, the Soviet empire a fast-fading memory, and NATO's largest member, the United States, increasingly distracted elsewhere, the alliance has become a victim of its own success. Today, it is an organization that has worked itself out of a job and embarked on a search for new meaning and a new role in a different world.

Some argue that NATO shouldn't even try. They believe it should quietly fade away and free its member governments from the costly, essentially futile exercise of cooking up new tasks for an institution already living on bureaucratic inertia.

"NATO's future is behind it," declared retired U.S. Rear Adm. Eugene Carroll Jr., deputy director of the Washington-based Center for Defense Information. In an interview, he described the alliance as "an inhibiting element" in the quest for new, more appropriate ways of addressing the post-Cold War environment.

"Right now, it is glue for papering over a mismatch in priorities," Carroll said.

Others aren't so sure.

They look out over a Europe that is less stable, less predictable and more prone to armed conflict that at any time since the 1930s. They see an uncertain Russia staggering between reform and repression and insist it would be folly to abandon America's only collective security alliance, one whose years of work has produced an irreplaceable level of cooperation and teamwork among Western democracies.

They want to harness that experience, reshape it and redirect it to solve new problems.

They envision an even larger NATO that would expand to include Poland, the Czech Republic and other former Communist states in Central and Eastern Europe, a NATO in which America's European partners would shoulder a greater share of the burden in a grand joint venture to preserve the peace and promote democracy both within the borders of member countries and beyond.

"The new NATO task is to project stability across the European continent for non-members as well as members," said Rep. Lee H. Hamilton, D-Ind.

Added British Defense Minister Malcolm Rifkind: "NATO remains crucial to the defense and security needs of the nations on both sides of the Atlantic."

1 Two equally controversial and closely connected issues pivotal to the alliance's future are its expansion and its relations with Russia.
88 percent of Californians said illegal immigration was a problem for the state. But at the same time, a slim plurality said that legal immigration was not a problem. More generally, the public's views on illegal immigration mirror prevailing attitudes toward Congress: People say they love their representative, but loathe the institution.

"People have always had one notion of illegal immigration as a whole, and a very different notion about Jose down the street," said Philip Martin, a professor of agricultural economics at the University of California, Davis.

Moreover, public perceptions change over time. During recessional periods, such as the early 1990s, communal anger over illegal immigration rose based on a belief that "foreigners" were stealing jobs or burdening the government. But when Wilson and his former wife hired an undocumented worker as a maid back in the 1970s, the climate and the law were quite different.

It is difficult to divine whether Wilson will be hurt by the current controversy or whether it will pass. The governor's former wife has assumed full blame for the matter, and Wilson's presidential campaign chairman, Craig Fuller, predicted that all would be forgiven:

"Fair-minded people who know the facts of this matter will understand that both the law and our society are very different today than they were 17 years ago," Fuller said in a statement. Hiring undocumented workers, he added, was legal at the time, although the Wilsons were required to make Social Security payments for their maid, and failed to do so.

Still, Wilson's actions were different than those committed by Huffington, whose hiring of an undocumented baby sitter came after federal law explicitly forbade it.

And voters' capacity to pardon is well-documented, as evidenced in recent annals of political history. Ronald Reagan, for example, had a messy family life: complete with divorce and estranged children but he was elected twice and remains immensely popular.

President Clinton had a far heavier load of baggage as a candidate: from his alleged philandering to accusations--that he smoked marijuana and dodged the draft--but managed to land in the Oval Office nonetheless.

If Wilson is harmed by the new controversy, political analysts say it will be because of his record as an outspoken critic of illegal immigration. In his gubernatorial campaign last year, Wilson condemned a "flood" of illegal immigrants and their burden on society. And he has promised to raise the issue endlessly, and if there is a No. 1 offender, it's Pete Wilson," said Lisa Navarrete of the National Council of La Raza, a Latino advocacy group in Washington. "With this revelation ... we know for sure he's a total hypocrite on this issue."

(Russian Asks Clinton to Condemn Chechen Conflict at Summit By Norman Kempster= (c) 1995, Los Angeles Times=)

WASHINGTON Sergei Kovalyov, fired from Russia's top human rights post for his outspoken opposition to the bloody repression in Chechnya, called on President Clinton Thursday to condemn the Chechen conflict when he meets Russian President Boris N. Yeltsin next week.

Kovalyov said he worries that Clinton will employ "customary Western politeness" when he criticizes Russia's role in the breakaway republic of Chechnya at the Moscow meeting, diluting the message to the point where it can be misunderstood by Yeltsin and other Russian politicians. But Secretary of State Warren Christopher said Clinton intends to warn Yeltsin that Russia's military operations in Chechnya are tarnishing the country's reputation and delaying Moscow's "acceptance into Western institutions" like the annual meeting of the world's seven leading economic powers.

"We have made clear our views and we will continue to make clear our views," Christopher said. "I think that Mr. Kovalyov, who has performed ... heroically in this matter, has to recognize that the United States is doing what it can to try to ensure that this conflict comes to an end."

Although Kovalyov did not meet Clinton, he delivered his message to some of the administration's top officials, including Christopher, Vice President Al Gore, Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott and national security adviser Anthony Lake.

He said the American officials all assured him of U.S. concern about Chechnya. But he added tartly: "The word 'concern' is not adequate to describe the bloodshed that is taking place."

(Fighting continued in Chechnya Thursday, mocking claims of the Russian military that the rebellion has been crushed and dashing Moscow's hopes for a truce during the V-E Day celebration."

In a clear indication that the warfare in the north Caucasus region is far from over, Russia decided to send in marines specially trained to fight guerrillas, the Interfax news agency reported. Russian Defense Minister Pavel S. Grachev, quoted by Russia's official Itar-Tass news agency, said that all but a few rebels in Chechnya have been crushed. But he said the remaining insurgents could "spoil the festive mood" by launching guerrilla attacks while Clinton and other
Leaders of the NATO nations, reacting to pressure from countries such as Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic, first committed themselves to eventual enlargement at a January 1994 summit. But the issue came to a head only late last year, when it became a Clinton administration priority and the only foreign policy priority in the Republican Congress' "Contract With America."

The intensity of the American push immediately unsettled European allies and angered Moscow, which remains deeply suspicious of its Cold War adversary. It also turned a NATO foreign ministers' meeting last fall into what one alliance staffer referred to as a "train wreck" a collision between the U.S.-led push for enlargement and carefully nurtured plans to forge a new working relationship with Russia.

The collision took place in the full public glare last December as Kozyrev miffed over the expansion plans unsettled European allies and angered Moscow, which instead denounced enlargement.

U.S. officials predict that Moscow's resistance could case when Clinton and Yeltsin meet in Moscow May 9-11, although the last time the two were together, at an Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe meeting in Budapest in December, Yeltsin warned of a "cold peace."

Advocates of enlargement claim NATO's security guarantees will help build new confidence into the struggling post-Communist nations, speed their integration into the West and bring their armed forces under democratic control more quickly. They also argue it would be impossible in a divided Europe to deny these states equal security over the long term.

Ironically, the enlargement issue is probably nowhere less understood than in the United States: the country lobbying hardest for it. Few Americans realize, for example, that an expansion of NATO effectively extends America's nuclear umbrella and commitments the United States and other members to defending those new entrants in case of attack.

"I don't think the public has been prepared for what that actually means," said Sen. William S. Cohen, R-Maine, a key member of the Senate Armed Services Committee. "If we extend NATO membership, are we willing to go to war to defend Poland and the Czech Republic? I suspect the answer is no."

An internal study under way at NATO headquarters in Brussels is attempting to assess the potential impact of enlargement, but even those involved admit it's very much a subjective exercise.

The task of a group charged with studying such things is the potential difficulties of building the consensus needed for action within an 18-, 20- or 25-member alliance compared to the present 16 has been dismissed by some as alchemy.

"It's about as meaningful as a committee on how to make love," said Frederick Bonnart, editor of NATO's Sixteen Nations, an independent military journal published in Brussels.

Despite NATO's present lack of clearly defined purpose or direction and its weakened leadership, its supporters believe history and the alliance's proven strength eventually will prevail.

This is a time to understand that we're going through a process, a process where we have to focus on the fundamentals which are extremely strong," said John Kornblum, U.S. Principal Deputy secretary of state for European and European Community Affairs. "We must not be led astray by the need for some sort of all-encompassing vision, but rather we must live with the debate."

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Ignoring Cease-Fire, Croats and Serbs Clash, Move Troops By Tracy Wilkinson= (c) 1995, Los Angeles Times=

ZAGREB, Croatia As Croatian troops were reported massing at new fronts, hold-out pockets of rebel Serbs clashed with government forces Thursday, despite an hours-old cease-fire that no one seemed to notice.

U.N. officials said Croatian army troops attempting to mop up the small Serbian enclave they recaptured this week encountered resistance for about two hours from a unit of about 200 Serb soldiers.

While several hundred Serbs turned over their weapons and surrendered in the east-central Croatian town of Pakrac, fighting continued farther south, U.N. officials said late Thursday.

The skirmishing was sufficiently intense to force U.N. special envoy Yasushi Akashi to scrap a trip to the region, where he had hoped to oversee a demobilization ceremony.

"It doesn't seem like it's over yet," said a U.N. official. "The pockets of resistance are still active."

The United Nations also reported Croat soldiers in the recaptured town of Okucani, about 65 miles southeast of Zagreb, were looting homes and properties of Serbs who fled. More than 5,000 Serbs are believed to have fled southward to Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Perhaps even more ominous for peace were indications that the Croatian army, flush from the relative ease with which it took the enclave known as Western Slavonia, has moved tanks and hundreds of troops into position near two larger, Serb-held, U.N.-protected regions.

The operation to take Western Slavonia was swift, allowing government forces for the first time to regain large parts of the land seized in 1991 by Serbs who rebelled over Croatia's decision to secede from Yugoslavia. The ensuing war killed 10,000 people.

But Serbs responded Tuesday and Wednesday by bombarding Zagreb with rocket-carried cluster bombs, killing six and wounding almost 200. The sites hit included a children's hospital, the National Theater and private apartment buildings.

Farther away, Croat and Serbian troops were grouping near the city of Osijek, on opposite sides of the border of an especially volatile area that abuts Serbia, U.N. sources said.

And in south-central Croatia, Croat troops marched past U.N. observation posts meant to monitor a buffer zone between Serb and Croat enemies, ejecting or harassing U.N. peacekeepers and restricting their movements.

The actions on two fronts raised the specter of a new offensive and came as Croats and Serbs exchanged threats of retaliation. Croatian officials, while not commenting directly on troop movements, said the army's actions were purely preventive.

But a U.N. military source said of the assault on the observation posts, "This means (the Croats) are trying to hide something. These guys are better at this than we are -- they conceal their intentions very, very well."
Israelis to begin paying a territorial price for peace on two fronts: the West Bank and the Golan Heights.

Rabin to Ask Clinton's Help in Moving Talks Forward

By Mary Curtius (c) 1995, Los Angeles Times

JERUSALEM A politically troubled Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin will travel to Washington on Friday to explore with President Clinton ways to move forward Israel's peace talks with Syria.

Israel celebrated its 47th Independence Day Thursday. But the fireworks and picnics could not conceal the mood of melancholy that has gripped the nation for months.

Melancholy is bad for Rabin, who is edging toward asking Israelis to begin paying a territorial price for peace on two fronts: the West Bank and the Golan Heights.

Both the Israelis and the Clinton administration have biled Rabin's weekend visit as a critical point, a last-ditch effort to bridge the big gaps between Syria and Israel and begin serious negotiations aimed at concluding a peace treaty between them within months.

Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres paved the way for the talks by meeting with Clinton in New York last week, and Rabin said he is bringing "new ideas" with him to his meeting with the president at the White House on Sunday.

Rabin's problem is that he is trying to find a way to advance his talks with Syria at a time when many Israelis, even within his own Labor Party, are having second thoughts about making peace with their neighbors.

The first phase of Israeli-Palestinian interim peace arrangements is widely regarded as having largely failed, with the Palestinians being unable to prevent attacks from the Gaza Strip on Israelis and the Israelis unwilling to make good on commitments to extend self-rule and help build a Palestinian economic infrastructure.

Israel is supposed to reach agreement with the Palestinians by July 1 on redeployment of Israeli troops out of West Bank towns and villages and on holding Palestinian self-governing authority elections in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

But even a phased Israeli shift of troops would entail political risks for Rabin. He expects political resistance not only from 140,000 Jewish settlers living in the West Bank but from the Likud opposition and elements in the army who fear they will be unable to protect settlers on the roads.

Still, Rabin has insisted in messages passed to Syrian President Hafez Assad by U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher that he is willing to conclude a treaty in months and to bring it before Israeli voters in a referendum before the next national elections.

"I explained to Clinton that the difference between a peace treaty with Syria, if we achieve it, and all the previous peace agreements is that, in the past, any agreement was between us and one country," Peres told Israeli reporters after last week's meeting with Clinton in New York. "If we reach an agreement this time, it will in fact put an end to the state of war in the Middle East."

In an interview he taped in Aqaba with Jordan's King Hussein, aired Wednesday by Israeli television, Rabin explicated what he got from the Clinton Administration in a telephone conversation on Friday.

Rabin declined to elaborate on the "new ideas" he will present to Clinton.

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But his options are limited, said one Israeli analyst.

"The only thing that will move this forward is if Rabin utters the magic words that Assad is waiting to hear," said Professor Moshe Maoz, a Syria specialist at Hebrew University in Jerusalem. "Rabin has got to whisper in Clinton's ear that Israel is willing to withdraw on the Golan Heights to the international border."

Maoz said it is essential that Clinton stay personally involved in the negotiations and that the administration present its own proposals to bridge the differences on the depth and pace of an Israeli pullback and the structure of security measures each side will take.

(End optional trim)

Karadzic, speaking on a Cable News Network program honoring former President Carter, accused the Croats of slaughtering innocent Serbian people" in Western Slavonia.

Reporters who witnessed Thursday's surrender said an officer was handcuffed and led away at gunpoint by Croat soldiers. The women and children who stayed behind seemed frightened and dismayed.

How the Croats treat the Serbs who choose to remain in the reconquered enclave will be an important test of whether Croats can govern with fairness toward ethnic minorities and respect their human rights, analysts said.

Meanwhile, they noted, it also has become clear that the international community will not punish Croatia for its military offensive, which shattered a 3-year cease-fire and violated U.N. truce lines.

Croatia has indicated it has no intention of giving its reclaimed land back. Critics said it appears that the use of military aggression once again achieved its goal, contrary to U.N. and world peace-keeping objectives.

"We'd like to believe we are not legitimizing aggression in any case," said Fred Eckhard, Akashi's spokesman, "but just moving, falling back each time the parties break another agreement between themselves or with us, and try to stabilize or push them back in the direction of a negotiated settlement ... We've been quite flexible in that sense and we've been pushed around in the process."

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The Ailing Atlantic Partnership

The ties that bind the U.S. and Europe are starting to fray. The Cold War threat has evaporated. Economic and cultural disputes have emerged. Such changes worry both leaders and small-town citizens.

By ART PINE
and TYLER MARSHALL

FULDA, Germany—When Mayor Wolfgang Hamberger speaks about the state of relations between Western Europe and the United States, what worries him is not how much it costs to replace property lost in the massive military bases and a massive military presence in Europe to help stave off the Soviet threat.

But now Americans, tired of bearing the burdens of international leadership and worried about the Atlantic relationship being buffeted by new crosswinds at every level, the United States has withdrawn more than two-thirds of the 327,000 troops it had in Europe during the 1980s. President Clinton has pledged to keep 100,000 here permanently, but he is facing some pressures to withdraw even more. Americans need to invest at least as much as the Europeans in the way their generation commerce, that could be a serious loss.

SOME FEAR such disputes could gradually erode the relationship.

“We need to invest at least as much time and energy in the development of new economic architecture as we are doing in the restructuring of NATO,” warns Jeffrey E. Garten, the U.S. undersecretary of commerce. “This is not the case, and we have no time to lose.”

Clashes have also occurred in other areas, such as how fast to expand the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, whether to lift the U.N. arms embargo against the government of Bosnia-Herzegovina and how far to allow Kurds to pursue Kurdish rebels into Iraq.

Robert M. Kimmitt, former undersecretary of state and now a statistical analyses are not available, the proportion of Americans claiming European ancestry has fallen sharply since World War II.

“There is no credible or relevant voice at the moment—calling for a continuation of a strong transatlantic partnership,” John Kornblum, a State Department official, said in a recent speech at the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

Other factors are at work.

Europeans, aware of these changes and free from their dependence on U.S. military might for their survival, are searching for ways to assume more responsibility.

They also have been distracted by other issues, including a deluge of immigrants from the Muslim world, a revival of the nationalist right and demands by Central Europeans for admission to the Western European club.

As transatlantic affairs become more economic in nature, America increasingly is being viewed as more a competitor than an ally. In recent months, for example, Europe and the United States have locked horns on economic and cultural issues ranging from how long Hollywood should continue to dominate Europe’s movie fare to who should write the rules for the new World Trade Organization.

W hen the U.S. Army’s 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment left, so did the German American Contact Group, the German American Women’s Club and the evenings at the regimental recreation center, where German young people tended to outnumber the Americans two to one.

“We never had the feeling that they were strangers,” the mayor said in a recent interview. “They were always part of the town.”

Why else, he asks, would townspeople have taken to the streets in early 1991 to support the Persian Gulf War, when peace protests had locked major German cities? “The answer is easy,” he says.

“To us, those Americans fighting in the Gulf were real people, with real faces and names that we knew, They were us.”
Today's debate: GUNS & SCHOOLS

**Attack real gun problem**

**OUR VIEW**

Grandstanding for gimmicks like gun-free school zones does nothing to curb violence.

You expect the National Rifle Association to stir all the wrong passions. When its officers stand by insupportable fear-mongering about “jackbooted government thugs” coming to “seize our guns,” as Executive Director Wayne LaPierre recently did, you can only shake your head. Even Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole says the NRA needs a “little image repair job.”

Alas, it’s no different when the gun-law firebrand is President Clinton. Two days after the Supreme Court overturned a puny 1990 law making it a federal crime to carry a firearm within 1,000 feet of a school, Clinton was hollering, “The Supreme Court decision could condemn more of our children to going to schools where there are guns,” he blew, “I am determined to keep guns out of our schools.”

Saying that a federal gun-free schools law will make students safer is like the NRA saying that the solution to gun crime is tougher sentencing. Both trivialize the problem — gun violence — and both champion ideas that, although easy to embrace, are worthless.

Studies have failed to find any strong correlation between higher incarceration rates and lower crime rates. And much the same is true of the Gun Free School Zones Act. Clinton himself points out that between 1990 and 1993, the number of high schoolers carrying guns doubled. And the law isn’t necessary in the first place. At least 40 states have created gun-free zones of their own.

At the time of enactment, much was made of the fact that 71 students and teachers had been shot dead in the previous five years. Now as then, that’s intolerable. But then as now, that was a bare fraction of the real toll. During the same five years, guns killed a total of 171,000 Americans. More than 10 million new guns went on sale.

Plainly, if you worry about students with guns, then you should be worried about where they get them. And against that deep concern, the federal law — and Clinton’s high-blown rhetoric — are useless. One reason for runaway gun violence is the nation’s lack of any efficient way to monitor gun sales or incidents of firearm violence.

As a result, lawmakers and law enforcers are unable to make real-time decisions about fighting gun-related crime and violence. And so they guess and bluster.

The gun crisis extends far beyond school zones. And Clinton came close to that idea when he said: “We need a seamless web of safety that keeps guns out of the hands of our children and out of our schools.” But no web can be “seamless” unless it includes registration and licensing and a national system to monitor gun sales and violence.

That’s not jackbooted; it’s just sensible. And it’s sensible because unlike gun-free zones, it is dispassionate, appropriate and, in the end, it will work.

**Keep schools gun-free**

**OPPOSING VIEW**

We as a nation have an obligation to keep our children safe, especially in school.

By Herb Kohl

The Supreme Court’s 5-4 decision invalidating the Gun-Free School Zones Act cripples Congress’ power to fight violence in our schools and raises questions about the federal government’s ability to protect its citizens.

America has a national interest in creating a safe environment for our children to learn. You can bet that Johnny won’t learn to read if he worries the kid behind him might be packing a Baretta 9-mm. A deteriorating education system will mean a less competitive workforce and a lower American standard of living.

The court’s ruling also might impact other public health and safety laws.

The constitutional basis for the Gun-Free School Zones Act is the same as that for laws regulating drugs, machine guns, even preserving the environment. Will the Supreme Court next decide that Congress doesn’t have the right to protect our resources and citizens even when it’s in the national interest?

The direct result of this ruling is dismay. Every day, 100,000 kids bring guns to schools. Teen-agers today are seven times more likely to be killed by a gun than they were 30 years ago.

If this were a contagious disease killing our children, no one would question the federal government’s authority to intervene. The federal government should not be blocked from trying to save children’s lives just because the cause of death is a bullet hole and not a virus.

I realize that lawyers and justices can debate the limits of congressional authority. But are those arguments more eloquent than that of Brigit Wallace, a fourth-grader in Mequon, Wis., who wrote me a year ago? She said, “I am only nine years old and I know there are young children my age being killed by guns. I want them off the streets. Please stop letting guns get out of hand.”

To me, that plea speaks more to our constitutional obligation than any brief before the Supreme Court.

Sen. Herb Kohl, D-Wis., is author of the Gun-Free School Zones Act and former chairman of the Senate Juvenile Justice Subcommittee.
managing director of Lehman Bros., argues that in some ways the United States is facing a turning point in its foreign policy, one similar to the situation it confronted immediately after World War II.

"The natural tendency was to return to our problems at home," Kimmitt says, "but we had a group of people who realized that we must be strong and successful abroad. My sense is that we're slipping back into a sort of zero-sum analysis—the kind that can give you trouble."

With the single issue the most overriding during much of the Cold War era, it is not surprising that one debate today centers on how big a role the United States should continue to play in providing for Europe's security.

With Asia becoming an economic powerhouse and China emerging as a potential economic and military threat, many Americans are looking toward the Far East as the place where the United States should be concentrating its foreign policy interests.

Only last month, Michael Lind, a senior editor of Harper's magazine, called for an "Asia-first" foreign policy aimed at maintaining the balance between Japan and China and forcing both countries to open their markets to more U.S. goods.

Clinton Administration strategists scoff at the notion of shifting to an Asia-first policy, but they concede that the idea of maintaining the old transatlantic relationship has lost much of the support that it enjoyed in Cold War days.

Those seeking to bolster U.S.-European ties argue that despite current difficulties, the link remains America's single most important international relationship—in trade, in shared values and in defense:

* The United States still has vital geopolitical interests in Europe, from avoiding further intra-European fighting to keeping Germany from dominating the Continent to making sure that Russia does not intimidate the Europeans.

Trade and investment between the United States and Europe make the Continent far and away America's most important global economic partner. In 1990, they racked up a two-way trade of $224 billion—with an additional $400 billion in investment flows—accounting for 9.5 million jobs.

Because of their countries' common heritage, many Americans and Europeans have a set of shared values that transcend U.S. relationships with other regions: everything from the Judeo-Christian tradition to the ideas expressed in the Constitution.

The steady withdrawal of U.S. troops from the Continent—combined with stories that Americans are shifting their attention to domestic concerns—and the major attempt to deal with a security problem without American leadership—containing the civil war in Bosnia—has traumatized European capitals and has seriously eroded the region's collective self-confidence.

"All of a sudden, Europeans found themselves without Big Brother's guidance," says Francois Heisbourg, former director of the International Institute of Strategic Studies in London and now a French defense industry executive. "They were lost."

In many ways, the balkan crisis has merely underscored what Europeans already know: In a post-Cold War world, they must shoulder much more of their own security burden.

In the meantime, the ties between the Seymours and the Puldas have not all faded. In Fulda, near the empty former U.S. military base a mile west of the city center, Klaus Sorg, the local Ford dealer, recalls a visit to Orlando, Fla., a few years ago. For him, it captured the U.S.-European relationship in a snapshot.

Expecting a long series of inquiries at the airport checkpoint, Sorg was taken aback when the U.S. immigration officer asked him only one question: "How are things at the Carp?"—Fulda's best-known hotel and restaurant.

"He'd served there as a soldier," Sorg explained.

Pine reported from Seymour and Washington, Marshall from Fulda and Brussels. Researcher Isabelle Mencamp of The Times' Brussels Bureau also contributed to this report.

Next: The North Atlantic Treaty Organization—Where is it headed?
Top of page:

Col 1: The Cold War threat that sustained America's oldest overseas relationship has evaporated, bringing economic and cultural disputes to the fore: that worries not only leaders but ordinary citizens. (ALLIANCE, moving Wednesday).

Cols 2-5: The FBI arrests two men, including one initially believed to be the elusive John Doe No. 2, at a motel in southwestern Missouri; but officials express deepening skepticism that the men have any connection to last month's Oklahoma City bombing. (with art). (BLAST-TIMES, moved).

Col 6: Abruptly abandoning a 9-month-old vow, the Clinton administration says it will permit the immigration of almost all the 20,000 Cuban refugees still held at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, but will forcibly repatriate all who flee the island from now on. (CUBA-TIMES, moved).

Above fold:

Col 2: War reaches the capital as rebel Serbs launch rocket attacks that hit police headquarters and other targets in central Zagreb, while the Croatian army pushes its offensive against Serb separatists deep into the heart of rebel territory. (CROATIA-TIMES, moved).

Col 3-4: A Los Angeles Police Department chemist presents jurors with the first blood test evidence against O.J. Simpson, testifying that blood stains from the scene of the June 1994 slayings in the case contain some genetic markers identical to the defendant's while other stains discovered at his estate and elsewhere resemble those of the two victims. (SIMPSON, moved).

Below fold:

Col 4: Orange County, Calif., wins bankruptcy court approval to disburse $5.7 billion to more than 200 cash-strapped cities, schools and government agencies, staving off a possibly devastating string of municipal defaults and bankruptcies. (BANKRUPT, moved).

Bottom of page:

Cols 1-2: Evoking recollections of his Southern roots and childhood, beleaguered Surgeon General nominee Dr. Henry W. Foster Jr. told a Senate committee Tuesday he made an "honest mistake" when he understated the number of abortions he performed as a physician and insisting: "There was never any intent to deceive."

"I had no reason to do so," he said during the opening moments of his confirmation hearings before the Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee. "First of all, I am a doctor who delivers babies," Foster said. "My life's work has been devoted to bringing healthy lives into this world, and trying to assure that every child born is a wanted child."

The hearing before the Republican-dominated committee climaxes a tumultuous three-month confirmation marathon for Foster and for President Clinton, who has sworn to "go to the mat" for the Nashville, Tenn., obstetrician/gynecologist and educator. Foster's nomination has been caught between the polarizing forces of abortion rights and abortion foes, although most of the rhetoric has focused on Foster's truthfulness or lack of it.

Foster, 61, founder of a Nashville program for teen-agers called "I Have a Future," has said he wants to focus on combating teen pregnancy.

While his chances with the committee remain uncertain, Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole, R-Kan., has threatened to keep the nomination from reaching the Senate floor, and Sen. Phil Gramm, R-Texas, has vowed to filibuster it if it does. Dole, who is vying with Gramm for the GOP presidential nomination, has predicted the nomination will die in committee.

Its survival at that level hinges on three critical GOP swing votes who remain undecided: Sens. Bill Frist, a fellow physician and Tennessean; Nancy Kassebaum of Kansas, who chairs the committee; and Jim Jeffords of Vermont, who frequently votes with the Democrats.

All three indicated Tuesday they would base their decisions on Foster's professional credentials and his record, and would not allow the nomination to