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## Toward a new transatlantic bargain

By Stanley R. Sloan

**RICHMOND, VT.** - The United States and its Atlantic allies have created a new Russia-NATO Council in advance of NATO enlargement. Up to seven countries may be invited to join the North Atlantic Treaty Organization when allied leaders meet in November.

The Bush administration presumably wants to convey that it still supports NATO by endorsing the new ties to Russia and favoring some form of "big bang" enlargement.

However, NATO's utility will shrink unless the US and Europe also deepen their commitment to transatlantic cooperation. As NATO Secretary General Lord Robertson observed this week, NATO must "modernize or be marginalized."

In the 1990s, the allies sought to adapt NATO to post-cold-war challenges. Nevertheless, they now face a crisis of confidence. The Europeans have fallen far behind the US ability to deploy military forces on a modern battlefield. European weakness has contributed to unilateralist temptations in Washington.

Some on both sides of the Atlantic suggest making a virtue out of necessity: Let the US take care of the "war fighting" while Europe provides peacekeeping forces and finances reconstruction and development.

However, this sort of division would only intensify transatlantic differences about the nature of international problems and which instruments to use to deal with them – with the US always quicker to resort to force than Europe.

In spite of current differences, close Euro-Atlantic ties remain essential. If the US and Europe cooperate, as they must to conduct an effective war on terrorism, things get done. If they are at odds, international cooperation generally becomes more problematic.

When the transatlantic relationship faced a crisis in years past, the allies acted to strengthen their ties. Today, they face the same choice: Revitalize the Atlantic community or risk its growing irrelevance.

The Euro-Atlantic allies therefore need a "deepening strategy" to ensure a healthy relationship.

For starters, European political leaders must take more seriously existing NATO and European Union defense goals. The EU should continue developing an autonomous 60,000-troop expeditionary force, but it should put a higher priority on building a high-technology "spearhead force" of a few brigades and air squadrons that could enable Europe to "plug

into" future US military operations, as recommended by analysts at the US National Defense University.

In addition, NATO should create a Standing Counter-Terrorism Combined Joint Task Force Command. This command should bring together the military services of allied countries, along with intelligence assets and civilian finance and police expertise, to provide a pivot point for NATO's support of future counterterrorist operations.

The allies should explicitly reinforce their commitment to the North Atlantic Treaty's Article 4, which says that they will "consult together whenever, in the opinion of any of them, the territorial integrity, political independence, or security of any of the parties is threatened." Military responses to terrorist threats may have to reach far from Europe's borders, and that reality should be acknowledged.

For its part, the US needs the European allies if it does not want to become the world's policeman. US defense planning has recently paid little attention to the requirements for coalition operations. The US should, at a minimum, liberalize military-technology transfers to NATO allies.

Regarding future decisions about US strategy, doctrine, and weapons systems, it should ask: "How will available options affect our ability to operate in coalitions with our allies?" And, even though the US will retain many characteristics of a hegemon, it must try not to act like one.

Finally, the US and Europe must renew their commitment to the Atlantic community.

They can do this by appointing a "wise men's" committee to prepare a new Atlantic Community Treaty to be signed by all members of the EU and NATO. The treaty should include political, economic, and other areas of cooperation that go beyond NATO's mandate. The new Atlantic Community Organization would embrace, not replace, NATO and US-EU bilateral ties, and provide a new foundation for the future of transatlantic relations.

• *Stanley R. Sloan is a visiting scholar at Middlebury College and director of the Atlantic Community Initiative. His book 'NATO, the European Union and the Atlantic Community: The Transatlantic Bargain Reconsidered' will appear this fall.*