

## THE POLITICAL AND CULTURAL UNDERPINNINGS OF ATLANTICISM'S CRISIS IN THE 1960S

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The term “Atlantic Community” was introduced in the early twentieth century by the American journalists Walter Lippmann and Clarence Streit.<sup>1</sup> It referred to a union of people and cultures, not solely of states.<sup>2</sup> The definition was an ecumenical one, combining a democratic concept of society with an alliance of the nations of Europe and North America. Atlanticists, as they came to be called, portrayed the Atlantic Community as the core area of “the West.” This was consistent with the world-historical — also called the civilizational — concept, which joined North America (usually without Mexico) and Europe into a single entity: no longer merely the Old and the New World, but instead a united Western civilization.

Expressions of mental geography, like most concepts, are possible to historicize and reconstruct. If some regionalisms do in fact rise, decline, and die, then when, why, and how? A critical reconstruction of their history calls for a process that examines the structure and norms of transnational society by way of its rhetoric, cultural trends, fashions, and, finally, its politics over time. Atlanticism has a particular trajectory, which relates to American Cold War hegemony and to the role of Europeans in the discursive construction of the West. Yet the outline of its life cycle is longer, dating back to the “invention” of America by Europeans in the early modern period, followed by the reciprocal (or derivative, depending on where one lived) invention of New World ideology.<sup>3</sup> By the end of the nineteenth century, a reinvented Atlantic concept had begun to overtake its rivals, namely Americanism, or the idea that the New World is inherently distinct and different from the Old. “Transatlantic,” “cis-Atlantic,” and “circum-Atlantic,” to cite the terms used by David Armitage to describe contending definitions of the Atlantic world in the earlier period, had begun to merge into a single “Atlantic” culture.<sup>4</sup> That shift, in turn, reflected and encouraged a more overt and active political role for the United States in European affairs, reversing a tenet of American politics dating back to Washington’s Farewell Address. The political shift, in turn, encouraged a social convergence across the Atlantic, as the number of Atlanticists — from bankers and diplomats to artists — multiplied so that by mid-century it became possible for a prominent writer like Lippmann to acknowledge the fact of an Atlantic Community.

1 This essay is based on my longer study, *The Atlantic Century* (Cambridge, MA, 2009). I am grateful for the comments of Jan Logemann, Mary Nolan, Lauren Shaw, and Casey Sutcliffe, as well as to fellow members of the Oslo Contemporary International History Workshop, especially Klaus Petersen, Helge Pharo, and Katharina Rietzler.

2 Walter Lippmann, *U.S. Foreign Policy: Shield of the Republic* (Boston, 1943); Clarence Streit, *Union Now* (New York, 1939); Ronald Steel, “Walter Lippmann and the Invention of the Atlantic Community,” in *European Community, Atlantic Community?*, ed. Valérie Aubourg, Gérard Bossuat, and Giles Scott-Smith (Paris, 2008).

3 See J. H. Elliott’s interpretation in *The Old World and the New, 1492-1650* (Cambridge, UK, 1970).

4 David Armitage, “Three Concepts of Atlantic History,” in *The British Atlantic World, 1500-1800*, ed. Armitage and Michael J. Braddick (New York, 2002), 11-27.

By the interwar period it is possible to identify a confluence of six structural and cultural factors: A resurgence of nationalism in the United States vis-à-vis Europe alongside a recognition of American “civilization”; a progressive-era exchange of professional standards of public administration, including diplomacy, in most major European powers and in the United States; a shift toward collectivist, meliorist, and, for some, messianic thinking on both sides of the Atlantic; a related shift in the political sphere, resulting in the ideology of collective security; a political crisis within Europe and between Europe and its colonies; and an assertion of American economic and political influence in both places. For Americans, this result had to do with the country’s rise to globalism in a Eurocentric world; for Europeans, it meant keeping up with American “progress.” For some of both, it meant coming to realize that they and their societies were, or ought to be, more alike than different. But little of that could have happened on its own. Atlanticism needed empire builders as well as mediators: diplomats, merchants, investors, social entrepreneurs, cultural role models, and similar transnational actors — not only political figures but also other celebrities, from the patrons of literary salons to the film stars with their “mid-Atlantic” accents.

Tracing this trajectory is important for assigning historical significance to the variety, texture, and tone of Atlantic crossings that took place later in the twentieth century. Atlanticism varied by place and generation, as did the intensity of its expression. Its post-World War II apotheosis rested on older, diverse foundations. It was promoted by members of a self-identifying transatlantic elite to be sure, but it was not restricted to them, as the other essays in this issue show. People from many backgrounds who called themselves Atlanticists sought greater transnational solidarity. The bonds that held them together resulted as much from cultural empathy as from the demands of war and peace. That would appear obvious from their rhetoric. But alliances and allegiances were also complicated, and in some cases — as with the debate over partnership in the 1960s, described below — Atlanticists also appeared more preoccupied with differentiating themselves from one another than with promoting common transnational positions. This was not an inevitable source of weakness but became one by the middle 1960s when other factors — namely the stabilization of the Cold War in Europe and its destabilization vis-à-vis the rest of the world, as well as generational strains throughout the postwar West — took differentiation to such an extent as to challenge the viability of Atlanticism as both an ideology and a political movement.

Why did it appear to decline so quickly at midcentury? Why did the perception (and reality) of decline coincide with the institutionalization of so many elite networks? Was decline more the result of intra-mural competition or external pressures? Did it come mainly from an American preoccupation or a European one? Some answers may be found by contrasting well-known images, for example, the footage of John F. Kennedy's 1963 trip to Europe with the anti-Vietnam War demonstrations in many European capitals just a few years later. They present a striking difference in tone and substance, and evoke the paradoxes of the Atlantic Community — being at once concrete and malleable, robust and fragile. The paradoxes may have been less the product of midcentury crisis than the enduring pattern of transatlantic politics — one that lasted, arguably, until the 1990s when Atlanticism was subsumed or even overtaken by globalization.

The Atlantic Community and the concept of Atlanticism may survive in some quarters, or may be resurrected in a new century; but its twentieth-century life was a comparably short and intense one. It reached a peak in the late 1940s and early 1950s with the maturation of the generation that had endured the First World War, then underwent a series of challenges from the mid-1950s all the way through to the early 1980s, before its brief moment of Cold War "triumph." The preponderance of historical attention that has been devoted to Atlanticism has focused on these bursts of intensity: the Berlin crises that brought Europeans and Americans together; the Marshall Plan and the Helsinki Process that set precedents for creative, far-sighted diplomacy; the dramas of the European Defense Community, the Multilateral Nuclear Force, and the Euromissiles. European historiography has tended to favor such "doomed spasms of spontaneity," as Charles Maier has labeled them for an earlier setting.<sup>5</sup>

Less attention has been devoted by political historians to the latent human fabric — the transatlantic society of activists, civil servants, commentators, and ideologues — that sustained the policies and their related ideology throughout this period, not merely at its most newsworthy moments. A full history of Atlantic society in the twentieth century, less divided by momentous events than tied together by concepts, mentalities, and networks, has yet to be written from perspectives on both continents. It was the result not only of a structural convergence but also of a unique combination — or, as a sympathetic astrologer might put it, a fortunate conjunction — of political, cultural and generational factors favoring the redefinition

<sup>5</sup> Maier in Emily Rosenberg, ed., *A History of the World: A World Connecting, 1870–1945* (Cambridge, MA, 2012), 162.

and promotion of an Atlantic civilization. Reconstructing it in time through the eyes of its protagonists on both sides of the Atlantic therefore ought to begin with a few additional questions: what was at the root of a common regional consciousness that went by the name of Atlanticism? What sustained it? What counteracted it? And why? For Atlanticism was as much a social as an intellectual or ideological phenomenon; the actors and institutions that promoted it — as well as those that reacted against it — are as historically significant in their own right as the policies they promoted. That their ranks included both Europeans and Americans is clear, but an understanding of which actors mattered most at particular moments, as well as how different actors collaborated with or contested one another, is more elusive than one might expect.

### **Atlanticism and Its Rivals: The Emergence of a Concept**

The mid-twentieth century was rich in the study of sociology and social psychology, from Ludwik Fleck's collective communication theories and Paul Lazarsfeld's work on public opinion to Karl Deutsch's institutional analyses and the sociographic studies of Pierre Bourdieu. Their development in the climate of Atlanticism is significant.

It is also no coincidence that Atlanticist discourse has been described as a byproduct of the Second World War. Bernard Bailyn has written that the Atlantic idea, and the impetus for Atlantic history, arose precisely at that moment because wartime solidarity led Europeans and Americans to explore commonalities.<sup>6</sup> It is perhaps also significant that Bailyn, before doing his pioneering work in Early American history, was one of the first Americans of his generation to tout a familiarity with the work of the Annales School.<sup>7</sup> Around this time he also became the son-in-law of European émigré Lazarsfeld. The social and geographical premises of Atlantic history reveal these associations.

Bailyn claimed that a regional consciousness, and a regional history, originated and were augmented by a crisis of the international system. This is hard to dispute, although the chronology could be extended back to the previous war and its effects on several Atlanticists. Lippmann was a principal drafter of Wilson's Fourteen Points; Streit cut his journalistic teeth in Geneva covering the League of Nations. Both men became bitter critics of the failures of the Versailles Conference and of Wilson, yet they did not abandon their progressive passions. To them, Atlanticism came to represent an

6 *Atlantic History: Concept and Contours* (Cambridge, MA, 2005). See also Merel Lee-man's essay in this volume.

7 See Bernard Bailyn, "Braudel's Geohistory: A Reconsideration," *Journal of Economic History* 11 (1951): 277-82; Bailyn, "Review Essay," *Journal of Economic History* 37 (1977): 1028-34.

agent, or perhaps a refinement, of Wilsonianism: a more workable, pragmatic, and, ultimately, lasting effort to transform the nature of international politics that, in this case, at least, succeeded in merging universal ideals with regional (or local) realities.<sup>8</sup> If a regional security community could work for the Atlantic as a reification of universalism, then it might work elsewhere, but that was, for the moment, beside the point. According to its proponents, the West — then referring mainly to the major powers of Western Europe, including Britain, and the United States — stood at the vanguard of modern history; the Atlanticists' accomplishment, in other words, was to transform universalism and regionalism into complementary rather than contending ideologies and realities. A successful Atlantic Community could become the kernel, hub, or beacon for other communities or for an ever-larger West, which, by the end of the twentieth century, as already noted, became synonymous in some quarters (in the richest countries, namely) with globalization. Wilsonianism had traveled full circle, from universal to regional and back to universal, in a mere seven decades. Even the diplomat George Kennan, who had once been one of Wilson's bitterest critics, declared, sincerely, one presumes, at century's end that the age of Wilson had finally come.

To claim that Atlanticism and globalization coincide in theory and in practice may strike some people as a roundabout effort to rename the American century. It is, and it is not; the claim itself has as much to do with geopolitics and geoculture as it does with historical periodization. The twentieth century, especially its second half, drew America and Europe together more than any other two parts of the world. Yet the history of Atlanticism is not entirely subsumed within the rise of American hegemony. The two are impossible to separate for obvious reasons, but they are not historically coterminous, mainly because, again, Atlanticism is ecumenical: European voices, interests, and attitudes exercised at least as much power and responsibility as American ones.

Nevertheless, the literature on Americanization attests to the difficulty of taking ecumenism at its word: what was one person's Atlantic or global trend was another's American one.<sup>9</sup> Atlanticism moreover was not the only form of regionalism to fill the century; the doctrine of the separate spheres — the aforementioned Old versus New — survives.<sup>10</sup> Finally, even among Atlanticists, there were contending concepts, the most significant being the distinction between community and partnership. The latter, as formulated by Jean Monnet

8 See Daniel Laqua, ed., *International Reconfigured: Transnational Ideas and Movements Between the World Wars* (London, 2011), esp. chs. 1, 3, 4, and 9.

9 See Akira Iriye, "Globalization as Americanization?" in *The Paradox of a Global USA*, ed. Nayan Chanda, Bruce Mazlish, and Kenneth Weisbrode (Stanford 2007), 31-48; also well-known works on Americanization by Richard Pells, Reinhold Wagenleitner, Richard Kuisel, and Victoria de Grazia.

10 See Robert Kagan, *Of Paradise and Power: America and Europe in the New World Order* (New York, 2004); Ulrich Krotz, "The (Beginning of the) End of the Political Unity of the West? Four Scenarios of North Atlantic Futures," *European University Institute Working Papers, Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies* 31 (2008).

and his acolytes both in and out of official bureaucracies, promoted a Euro-American duopoly that they called the dumbbell. To Monnet, two strong unions — one in America, the other in Europe — would best guarantee the security and prosperity of the West and would be superior to a satellite system that featured a single large sphere (the United States) orbited by several smaller ones. To such dumbbellists — who called themselves “Europeanists” — this planetary image was too imbalanced to function well. Worse yet, it appeared to be nothing more than a façade that masked an American hegemony and subordinated European interests (and European integration) to Cold War rivalry.

The former group who called themselves “Atlanticists” included many of Streit’s followers, notably in the UK, the Netherlands, and Scandinavia, as well as people who played a role in founding the North Atlantic Alliance. These individuals were politicians, diplomats, intellectuals and similar “opinion leaders” (to use Lazarsfeld’s familiar term). They depicted the dumbbell idea as too closely resembling an old-fashioned balance of power construct and one that threatened the unity of the West. A dumbbell was not a Wilsonian community: it was neither an integrated network of concentric circles that emanated from somewhere in the mid-Atlantic, nor a union of like-minded nations, some small, some large, all committed to the greater sum of their parts. Some members of this group also sounded like today’s Anglophiles, Euroskeptics, or some combination of the two. To them, the Europeanists’ idea was too formal, too static, and too risky: if “America” and “Europe” were understood to be on equal ends of the dumbbell, then a break in the middle was conceivable. Also, if Western Europe was imagined to be one single unit at one end, where did this leave the rest of Europe? Was the Soviet bloc somewhere else entirely?<sup>11</sup>

As arcane as debates over dumbbells from the early 1960s can sound, they were significant. They mattered to some people like Monnet a great deal at the time and therefore ought to be re-examined on their own terms. Calling oneself an Atlanticist or a Europeanist, a unionist or a dumbbellist, had consequences beyond determining one’s policy allies, or even which clubs, dinners, boards, or study groups one attended — although the best known organizations, like Chatham House, the Council on Foreign Relations, and the Foreign Policy Association, did not generally exclude one or the other. These debates underpinned the structure of the transatlantic relationship

11 A good summary of the various positions may be found in the volume edited by Valérie Aubourg, Gérard Bossuat, and Giles Scott-Smith, *European Community, Atlantic Community? Atlantic Community and Europe 1* (Paris, 2008), and online at [www.soleb.com/pdf/cergy-atlantic-community/atlantic-community.pdf](http://www.soleb.com/pdf/cergy-atlantic-community/atlantic-community.pdf)

in important ways. The first was obviously political: what shape would the North Atlantic Alliance take? That is to say, what would its structure be: federal, confederal, something in between? Would the various Western European states deal with the United States separately or in unison? If the former, what states would dominate? If the latter, what institutions? And where would the European movement fit? “Atlanticists” argued that a community was superior to an alliance or partnership. “Europeanists” argued the opposite, except with respect to the European Community. In truth, both sides had much in common, including their names: both were Europeanists if this term is understood as equivalent to Eurocentrism; and both were Atlanticists if by that one means believing in transatlantic collaboration and solidarity. And some, including Monnet at times, sought to harmonize more than split the differences.

At another level, they raise fundamental questions of culture: Are Europeans and Americans more alike than different? Do they share a civilization? Or do they merely hold certain interests in common? There are many answers to these perennial questions, not all logically consistent. The doctrine of the two spheres persisted in the twentieth century, in spite of a certain meeting of the minds, induced, at least in part, by the cultural Cold War. De Gaulle liked to speak of a second force in the West while others — social democrats, for example — championed a Third Way. Even doctrinaire Atlanticists like the American diplomat Theodore Achilles (the man who wrote much of the North Atlantic Treaty after having been mesmerized by the writings of Streit) favored closer relations with some European nations over others. For them, European integration served as a vehicle for bringing about an Atlantic union. For Monnet it was the other way around, with permanent peace in Western Europe being the most desired end. He was a vigorous supporter of British accession to the Common Market but was very skeptical about any other path of enlargement. In this view, the viability of the European movement and its institutions took precedence over other goals, including the cohesion of the Atlantic Alliance — although again members of each camp, Monnet especially, often went out of their way to insist that European and transatlantic integration were not inherently contradictory.

Mapping these various orientations serves not only to underscore the intellectual and ideological diversity of transatlantic thinking in these years but also, and more importantly, to reinforce the composite



political and cultural nature of the Atlantic project. Atlanticists like Achilles made common cause across national lines, sometimes against compatriots. If their political imagination was directed at the best ways to organize “the West,” it was not only for the purpose of prevailing against the Soviet Union but also, and for some like Monnet even more so, for the West’s own sake. The interrelationships of these various groups also remind one just how tenuous many of them were at the time, a realization that becomes less sharp as one moves further away from the twentieth century and comes to depict it, or at least its second half, as a golden age in relations between Europe and America. By contrast, the more carefully one reconstructs it, the more fractious and fragile the Atlantic Century appears.

For all that some Europeans were said to turn to the United States in postwar desperation, such was conditioned by economic and cultural interpenetration of both societies well before the Second World War.<sup>12</sup> That this continued after the war probably had as much to do with the prewar scope and vitality of Atlanticism as it did with any inherent rationale for its wartime and postwar continuity. Just as transatlantic convergence cannot be divided neatly for comparison into prewar and postwar units, neither can convergence be said to have proceeded unidirectionally during either period. It does not easily advance the image of a more rapidly Americanizing “West.” Another reason for this may have been an even broader desire on the part of Atlanticists for sociopolitical convergence in both Europe and America, not simply involving the representations of the two continents, but also the aims of political movements — as with the effort to find a workable arrangement between the interests of democracy and welfare, for example. Even a number of Third Way advocates — Tony Blair and Joschka Fischer come to mind more recently — have found themselves reaching a point of compromise with existing alternatives. A similar thing happened with the various proponents of Atlantic and European union whereby European integration would take place alongside, and for the most part without counteracting, Atlanticism and its institutions.

### **Atlantic Diplomacy: Postwar Generations and the Crisis of the 1960s**

The political narrative of Atlanticism therefore follows a different chronology and emphasis from the usual one of war and peace: more generational than episodic, more cumulative than cyclical, more

12 Standard works include Frank Costigliola, *Awkward Dominion: American Political, Economic and Cultural Relations with Europe, 1919-1933* (Ithaca, NY, 1984); David E. Kaiser, *Economic Diplomacy and the Origins of the Second World War: Germany, Britain, France, and Eastern Europe* (Princeton, NJ, 1980); Daniel T. Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings: Social Politics in a Progressive Age* (Cambridge, MA, 1998).



fractious and contested than logical or heroic, no better symbolized, perhaps, than by the Berlin Wall, which fell, after so many crises, in a moment of unplanned cacophony and in the name of greater union. To this, one could add another forum for convergence: what may be called diplomatic culture. The United States established the Foreign Service in 1924, not long after the modernization of similar organizations in the major powers of Europe. The first corps of professional diplomats — who entered by competitive examination and were trained and promoted by the standards of a profession — did so with an image of Europe in the background; and to many of them like the aforementioned Achilles it was a complex mix of identifications ranging from imitation to rivalry. The most capable American representatives overseas had traditionally been consuls in Asia and Latin America; there were fewer in Europe, and certainly few professional diplomats (the consular and diplomatic corps had been separate until 1924). That now changed. “New” diplomats sought assignments to Europe, where they could interact with counterparts whom they deemed the best in the business, yet where, as Americans imbued with Wilsonian ideas, they may have quietly felt superior to these Europeans (and vice versa). Diplomats flourished in Europe because early twentieth century Europe was more cosmopolitan than most other places, not only because of the trappings of European colonialism but also because of the location of the headquarters of most international organizations, such that they existed at the time, in Europe, namely, in Geneva and Paris. America’s first professional diplomats like Joseph Grew, George Kennan, Chip Bohlen, and others gained a regional and global consciousness by way of Europe, even while insisting, as some but not all of them did, that they offered an alternative, and possibly more imaginative, extra-European outlook on the world.<sup>13</sup>

This is the initial diplomatic setting for Atlanticism. A group of prominent Americans in and out of government service (who included, besides journalists, foundation officials and bankers) joined Europeans to modify the methods of diplomacy with the “legalist-moralist” innovations that Wilson had advocated. New institutions formalized old alignments; laws and norms codified habits, rules, and customs; “public opinion” entered the secret corridors of high politics. This is the familiar early twentieth-century story. Atlanticism offers a different perspective through which one set of practices did not supplant another as much as several adapted and merged over time. That the effort was regarded as a half-success in response to a

13 See Waldo Heinrichs, *American Ambassador: Joseph C. Grew and the Development of the United States Diplomatic Tradition* (Boston, 1966); and the first volume of George F. Kennan’s *Memoirs* (Boston, 1967).

double-failure after 1919 (European and American), and that it represented a deliberate repudiation of isolationist axioms, is relevant to understanding the proliferation of transatlantic projects after the Second World War.<sup>14</sup> It corresponded to the life cycle — and cultural and political maturation — of an Atlantic generation.

Postwar networks thus built on a transnational practice that by now was in fact at least two generations old and reinforced ideological and cultural tendencies that had grown progressively fashionable in Europe and America.<sup>15</sup> Not only does this underscore the view that diplomacy is inherently and explicitly cultural but also the role of the West as a social and political laboratory throughout the twentieth century. On the one hand, as Daniel Rodgers's work has shown, this transfer took place reciprocally, that is, from the experience of reformers on each side of the Atlantic back to their own societies. This also happened to diplomacy. The United States accepted a European project and the first "permanent" defense alliance since American independence. Each effort advanced the midcentury collective and communitarian ethos. It is hard to imagine this having taken place without the earlier attempts at cultural and political transmission between Europe and America. But once again, it was not a process dictated entirely by crises or by cultural aspirations and tendencies but also by conscious, promotional efforts on the part of diplomats and political figures, intellectuals, and curators of knowledge, as well as social and cultural entrepreneurs, including the major private foundations, which in many cases possessed a sophisticated understanding of ways to promote transatlantic solidarity, from the visual and performing arts to the social sciences.<sup>16</sup>

Cultural attachment may not be the same thing as affinity, although the two can blur. The important point to acknowledge is the *prima facie* existence of such an attachment and to propose that it had as much to do with a mutual desire to help, teach, learn from, and interact as it did with some Americans' and Europeans' presumed desire to prove to themselves that they had something to teach, learn, and share; that they could refashion one another's measure of prestige; and that their own cultures, especially their diplomatic cultures, which relied so heavily upon the mutual acknowledgment of such prestige, were in mutual transition. In this respect, diplomatic culture is similar to others — in technology, production, and politics — where the forces of adaptation at once counteract and augment those of competition. The stakes for this dual experiment were high. It is

14 This view is generally consistent with the causation set out in recent works such as Elizabeth Borgwardt's *A New Deal for the World: America's Vision for Human Rights* (Cambridge, MA, 2005); and Mark Mazower's *No Enchanted Palace: The End of Empire and the Ideological Origins of the United Nations* (Princeton, 2009).

15 Nancy F. Cott, "Revisiting the Transatlantic 1920s: Vincent Sheean vs. Malcolm Cowley," *American Historical Review* 118, no. 1 (February 2013): 46–75.

16 See, *inter alia*, Helke Rausch, "Transatlantische Kultur- und Gesellschaftsgeschichte – deutsche und französische 'Amerikanisierung' in den 1950er und 60er Jahren im Vergleich," in *Dimensionen der Kultur- und Gesellschaftsgeschichte. Festschrift für Hannes Siegrist*, ed. Matthias Middell (Leipzig, 2007), 122–42; and John Krige and Helke Rausch, eds., *American Foundations and the Coproduction of World Order in the Twentieth Century* (Göttingen, 2012).

tempting to argue that nearly every other transatlantic phenomenon relied upon it, for a political breach or all-out cultural war, culminating in a something resembling a permanent isolationism in America and in Europe, would have vitiated a good deal. For this reason, the Atlantic era, if one may call it that, was so fraught by fear of failure. It was not simply that the Soviets might march all the way to the English Channel. It was also that Atlantic convergence was considered an important end in itself: as a way to prevent another world war and to promote a permanent improvement of social, cultural, and political life. In other words, it was a geopolitics in the service of civilizational progress. To Monnet, who was reputed to be inspired by the teachings of Teilhard de Chardin, this was part of the collective advance of humanity through the enlargement and enhancement of social units.<sup>17</sup> They were strengthened by expansion, then combination and consolidation; human beings could recognize, exploit, and profit by it, or fight it. They had been tearing down for half a century; now the time had come to rebuild and consolidate.

Why, then, did this optimism appear to break down so quickly a mere decade or so later? Why, by the early 1960s, did the most fervent Atlanticists, Monnet included, come to insist that the whole project had lost its way? And why did they advance an alternative concept — partnership — that so angered their fellow Atlanticists? Why, in other, more prosaic terms, did Atlanticism experience a post-adolescent and a midlife crisis at more or less the same time? Is a generational explanation sufficient? That is, had its founders reached the age of retirement and muddle-headedness? Had they become weary and distracted? Did they fail to imbue their successors with the wisdom drawn from two world wars? Or had the concept itself grown muddled? Did the prosperity of the mid- to late 1950s force a rethinking (or a blurring) of social and political priorities? Did the Suez and Algerian crises, and de Gaulle's return to power, really turn the Cold War on its axis from longitudinal to latitudinal, transforming an East-West conflict into a North-South one, as Matthew Connelly has argued?<sup>18</sup> Or did people just take the passing of a torch to a new generation too seriously?

One may never know why the whole world appeared to change on or about month X. This is too subjective. More relevant here is the ongoing effort by Atlanticists to survive and adapt to new circumstances. Most people probably would not have predicted that an Atlantic culture, let alone NATO or a European Union, would be alive and

17 Personal communication with Henry Owen, Washington, DC, 2006.

18 Matthew Connelly, *A Diplomatic Revolution: Algeria's Fight for Independence and the Origins of the Post-Cold War Era* (Oxford, 2002).

reasonably well by the second decade of the twenty-first century, without a Soviet empire next door and with a united Germany inside, and certainly not during the dark days of the mid- to late 1960s up through 1973, the year that Henry Kissinger christened the “year of Europe.”

### Atlantic Paradox Revisited: Institutions and a Waning Idea

The problem with the history of a concept is that it rests, ultimately, on a reconstruction of motive and motivation, which can never be known perfectly. Yet, the historical significance of a geographic community cannot exist without the beliefs, assumptions, and promotional apparatus behind it.<sup>19</sup>

The source of “Atlantic-mindedness” was not limited to a passion for transatlantic cohesion or consensus. It was not, in other words, defined exclusively by the ends it promoted but also by its preferred means. For lack of a better term, this has been called the “Monnet method” after one of its originators and its best known practitioner, who, one suspects, learned much of it from his early career as a cognac salesman in North America. Monnet honed the method back in Europe and then re-exported it to the United States.<sup>20</sup> He did this by the regular convocation of allies and fellow travelers — not exclusively Europeans — in organizations and individually for the purpose of lobbying governments to pursue favored policies. Monnet’s vehicle was his Action Committee for the United States of Europe, a diverse group of voluntary activists that resembled the nineteenth-century American associations described so well by Tocqueville. Its main activity was to draft and debate position papers, but its influence went well beyond them. The language in these papers was repeated so often and so exhaustively at so many gatherings that it seeped into public and private discourse. The method was one of salesmanship whose product was political consensus. The strength of the method on both sides of the Atlantic has been called into question for its lack of popular legitimacy, with some critics going so far as to label it *dirigiste*, even anti-democratic. That is another subject; what matters here is that nearly all historical treatment of the method focused on its role in furthering European integration. The method, in other words, has been seen as for, by, and about Europeans in Europe. Less acknowledged has been its application to transatlantic relations, which, it may be argued, were just as important to Monnet and were just as successful a manifestation of the method’s utility, if not more so, although again by its means rather than ends.<sup>21</sup>

19 A good example in this context may be found in Giles Scott-Smith, “Ghosts in the Machine? Ernst van der Beugel, the Transatlantic Elite and the ‘New’ Diplomatic History,” Inaugural lecture at Leiden University, 5 October 2009, <https://openaccess.leidenuniv.nl/handle/1887/19602>.

20 This is described in Pascaline Winand, *Eisenhower, Kennedy, and the United States of Europe* (New York, 1993); and in François Duchêne, *Jean Monnet: The First Statesman of Interdependence* (New York, 1994).

21 Winand has made this argument. See also Clifford P. Hackett, ed., *Monnet and the Americans: The Father of a United Europe and His U.S. Supporters* (Washington, DC, 1995); Sherill Brown Wells, *Jean Monnet: Unconventional Statesman* (Boulder, CO, 2011).

Monnet's Committee started work after the debacle of the European Defense Community in the mid-1950s and did not really hit its stride until the final few years of the decade. The history of the Monnet method is found in the record of this and similar committees during the same period. Some resembled policy clubs or quasi-academic institutions, the aforementioned Chatham House, and the Council on Foreign Relations, which had been founded a generation earlier (in 1920 and 1921, respectively) as efforts to promote the informed analysis and advocacy of international affairs. Others were more like typical American voluntary organizations that existed for sharing mutual interests and ideas and coordinating pressure on governments, that is to say, lobbying. Among these were the members of the Atlantic Treaty Association, established in each of the NATO countries; the Atlantic Union Committee, the American Committee on United Europe, and the Committee for a Free Europe in the US, and subsequently the Atlantic Council of the United States; the Bilderberg Group, founded in the Netherlands, the Atlantik-Brücke in Germany, Le Cercle and the Atlantic Institute in France. Although some of these organizations still exist, most had a comparably short lifespan, having reached their peak of influence from the late 1950s to the early to middle 1960s. Their chronology coincides with two countervailing trends: the aforementioned division among transatlantic advocates between "Atlanticists" and "Europeanists"; and the appeal of other parts of the world — notably Africa and Asia.

It is easy to overstate the influence of policy fads, and in retrospect, the period from about 1958 to 1966, which included the Berlin and Cuban Missile crises, was hardly moribund in Europe. Many Americans continued to be drawn to it (studies of haute couture, the popularity of the "art house" cinema, Julia Child, and package tours to Europe could be considered here). Back in the U.S. State Department, Europe would top the list of priorities for the Parisian-born Secretary of State, Christian Herter, who did much to repair the damage left behind by his predecessor, John Foster Dulles, in some parts of Europe. Upon leaving office with Eisenhower's departure in 1961, Herter went on to become the first chairman of the Atlantic Council of the United States. Herter had devoted much of his public career to Europe, from his days as a young member of the team at the Paris Peace Conference to his shepherding the Marshall Plan through Congress as the head of the Herter Committee. Joining him were several like-minded Atlanticists who stood against the *tiermondisme* of the new Kennedy administration; some, like Achilles, who took

retirement after an unhappy final posting in Peru, went so far as to act like sages in semi-official exile.<sup>22</sup> In the United States, the policy debate over regions had existed for a long time (and continues), but it took on particular significance in the early 1960s because of its coincidence with the development of a youth culture and a youth-driven politics (however transatlantic they may have been), and with a certain passion for the non-European world and, eventually, the involvement in a very costly war in Vietnam.<sup>23</sup>

In Europe another thing happened. Europe turned inward. The colonial powers one by one said their farewells to empire; the Common Market had been launched and began its long process of dominating the political and social agendas of many European capitals. In spite of their heavy representation in international organizations like the IMF, World Bank, OECD, et al., many Europeans took their global prerogatives for granted while citing the very globalization of these organizations — the OECD, for example, which became nominally extra-European after supplanting the OEEC — as indicators of Europe’s shrinking world role.<sup>24</sup> Paradoxical as this was on a number of levels, by the mid-1960s, another transatlantic divergence had set in.

The institutionalization of transatlantic advocacy therefore coincided with the waning of the Atlantic idea in the heart of federal Europe and in Washington little more than a decade after it had been launched as a postwar project. America and Europe again appeared to be heading their separate ways, and the West had begun, once again, to show signs of decay. There was the saga over the British entry to the Common Market and the crisis of the “empty chair” brought on by de Gaulle’s refusal to accede to a supranational Europe. The Allies fell out over Vietnam and, after 1967, the Middle East. De Gaulle took the opportunity the previous year to withdraw France from NATO’s combined military command and to expel the Alliance from its Paris headquarters. The gold and balance of payments crises continued to worsen, culminating finally in the dramatic scuttling of the Bretton Woods system. In the United States, Achilles and his friends at the Atlantic Council came increasingly to sound like the embattled defenders of a midcentury fortress. For example, several of them, led by former Secretary of State Dean Acheson, urged President Lyndon Johnson to punish de Gaulle for his 1966 action. Although Johnson refused (with good reason, in retrospect) to do it, he did not resist a break with the Old Guard, one that almost certainly conditioned their

22 This is found in Achilles’s unpublished memoir, “Fingerprints on History,” courtesy of S. Victor Papacosma.

23 See Thomas A. Schwartz, *Lyndon Johnson and Europe: In the Shadow of Vietnam* (Cambridge, MA, 2003); and recent studies by Martin Klimke, Holger Nehring, and Benjamin Ziemann.

24 See Giuliano Garavini, *After Empires: European Integration, Decolonization, and the Challenge from the Global South, 1957-1986* (Oxford, 2012), especially chapters 2 and 4.

break with him over Vietnam and their withdrawal from public life. As they became more strident, their influence, even outside government, diminished. Yet their institutions and organizations carried on.

At the middle of the 1960s, Atlanticism, and the transatlantic relationship itself, still demanded consensus, and the appearance of consensus, according to this older but feisty generation. It is easy to paint it in caricature as nostalgic and petulant. Yet its reaction was reflexive and should not have been surprising. This was not the first time consensus was seen to be in short supply: the 1950s and early 1960s saw a series of political crises — from the post-Korean War battle over the Lisbon force goals to the saga of the European Defense Community, followed a few years later by the seemingly arcane dispute over the Multilateral Nuclear Force. These were more apparent than real sagas involving the balance of collective armament — conventional in the first two instances, nuclear in the third. In each, the viability, even survival, of the Alliance was called into question, only to be followed by a rethinking and a reaffirmation, much as President Johnson handled the challenge from de Gaulle, on the one hand, and from the dumbbellists in his own administration (like Under Secretary of State George Ball, who also had once been Monnet's lawyer), on the other. The irony here may have been lost on some of the more strident members of the Old Guard like Acheson and Achilles — Johnson was simply following the pattern they had set. For example, he gave a speech in October 1966 that finessed the contending designs of Atlanticists and Europeanists by offering his own version of a Third Way.<sup>25</sup> In it, Johnson sought to harmonize an opening to the Eastern bloc amid a lessening of tensions over Europe — that is, a combination of what soon would be widely known, respectively, as *Ostpolitik* and *détente* — in a formula that prefigured the strategic calculus of the second Reagan and Bush administrations. For its part, NATO published the Harmel Report in 1967, which appears in retrospect to be something akin to a Vatican II for the Atlantic Alliance. Among other things, it sought to reaffirm the spirit of Article 2 of the North Atlantic Treaty:

The Parties will contribute toward the further development of peaceful and friendly international relations by strengthening their free institutions, by bringing about a better understanding of the principles upon which these institutions are founded, and by promoting conditions of stability and

25 For background on the speech, see Francis M. Bator, "Lyndon Johnson and Foreign Policy: The Case of Western Europe and the Soviet Union," available at [http://www.hks.harvard.edu/virtualbooktour/Old\\_Tour\\_Files/images/VBTBatorpdf.pdf](http://www.hks.harvard.edu/virtualbooktour/Old_Tour_Files/images/VBTBatorpdf.pdf)



well-being. They will seek to eliminate conflict in their international economic policies and will encourage economic collaboration between any or all of them.<sup>26</sup>

The Harmel Report built upon Article 2 in endorsing a policy of détente and, in its fifteenth point (out of seventeen), noted the relationship of the “North Atlantic Treaty area” to the “rest of the world.”<sup>27</sup> The motivations of the report were apparent — its official title stated the “Future Tasks of the Alliance” — and, in retrospect, prescient. The Alliance would evolve into a security community in the Wilsonian sense from a permanent defense alliance. This is suggested by the report’s language, along with the notion of acquiring a more global role. A couple of decades later, NATO’s mantra had become “out of area or out of business.”<sup>28</sup>

### **A Bigger Atlantic: From Regionalism to Globalism**

It did not take a trained sociologist to realize that the late 1960s were a time of great strain for the Atlantic Alliance and its member societies. What was interesting about the counter-reaction this time, however, was that it meant less a retrenchment — even a reformist retrenchment — than a striking out in new directions. Monnet’s Action Committee dissolved in 1975, but both the Atlantic Council of the U.S. and the Atlantic Institute began to sponsor studies and research committees on matters outside the Atlantic region, notably on economics and politics in Northeast Asia, energy and the environment, and the education of what they called the “successor generation.” This coincided with the work of other organizations, notably the Trilateral Commission, which was founded in 1973. Its mandate reflected the simultaneous effort by the Atlantic Council and sister organizations to bring Japan into cooperation with the Alliance as a quasi-Western power. The Atlantic Institute even contemplated removing “Atlantic” from its name as a way to attract more foundation funding but in the end did not — a decision that may have been one reason it eventually dissolved in the late 1980s. NATO contributed to the trend in 1969 with the establishment of the Committee on the Challenges of Modern Society (CCMS).<sup>29</sup> This was at the behest of the new Nixon administration and its effort to co-opt whatever liberals it could, and in this case, the prominent politician and one-time academic, Daniel Patrick Moynihan, who oversaw the U.S. contribution to the Committee and also joined the Nixon administration as its token liberal member.

26 [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official\\_texts\\_17120.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_17120.htm)

27 [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official\\_texts\\_26700.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_26700.htm)

28 Credit for coining the phrase generally has gone to NATO’s late secretary-general, Manfred Wörner.

29 See Christian Albrecht’s essay regarding the Club of Rome in this volume.

How seriously anyone — including Moynihan — took the CCMS is open to question. Kissinger, for example, has given it the slightest mention in his memoirs.<sup>30</sup> Few historians of the 1970s have much to say about it. Nevertheless, the CCMS survived for another few decades and produced several reports and projects, mainly having to do with the protection of the natural environment. They included the subjects of disaster relief, aircraft noise, air and water pollution, and “environmental awareness.”<sup>31</sup> The range of subjects reminds one, again, that NATO is, and to some extent always saw itself to be, something more than a military or defense alliance. It is not the exclusive embodiment of the Atlantic Community, but it is its best-known vehicle; and its history, therefore, is suggestive of the evolving tone of Atlanticism and of its adherents’ outlook on the future. Most of the Atlantic Treaty Association members, for example, sponsor educational branches that run student exchanges and other educational programming, and most are funded either in part or in whole by NATO or by national governments, as the North Atlantic Assembly of parliamentarians has been since the 1950s.

To map the patterns of influence among NATO and its appendages, as well as like-minded organizations and institutions from the Munich Conference and the Salzburg Seminar to dozens of smaller ones, not to mention multinational corporations, athletic, artistic, and other cultural groups, would require a very thick prosopography.<sup>32</sup> To demonstrate the ebb and flow in the strength and coherence of these groups vis-à-vis Atlanticism is nevertheless important. In doing so, one must not lose sight of the underpinnings, particularly if their political chronology presents a deceptive picture. Nineteen-sixty-eight has been portrayed in both historiography and popular culture as a seminal moment, a “crack,” as Immanuel Wallerstein once aptly described it, in the postwar world system.<sup>33</sup> To a large extent this was true, or it certainly seemed so to many people who experienced it. But in reconstructing the various Atlantic networks one can see the crack emerging at least a decade earlier as the elites whose transatlantic sensibility took root during the interwar years and whose approach to international affairs, typified by Lippmann’s, was advertised as a hardened and more circumscribed variety of Wilsonianism, began

30 Henry Kissinger, *White House Years* (Boston, 1979), 386–87. Kissinger characteristically took much of the credit for launching the

initiative and blamed the NATO allies for undercutting it. Moynihan’s oblique references to it are found in the collection of his letters

*Daniel Patrick Moynihan: A Portrait in Letters of an American Visionary*, ed. Steven R. Weisman (New York, 2010), 99–102.

31 A sampling of its work may be found in Committee on the Challenges of Modern Society, *Report of the First Meeting*, January 15, 1970, NATO; Harry C. Blaney, “Canadian/American Agreement, New Steps in CCMS, Inland Water Pollution Project,” *NATO Review*, no. 1 (1973): 18–19; “NATO-CCMS Achievements in Defence-Related Environmental Studies 1980–2001,” *Report No. A-2001/02*, NATO, March 2001; Alan Berlind, “NATO and the Environment,” *American Diplomacy, Commentary and Analysis* (March 2009); [http://www.unc.edu/depts/diplomat/item/2009/0103/comm/berlind\\_nato.html](http://www.unc.edu/depts/diplomat/item/2009/0103/comm/berlind_nato.html); and Stephen Macekura, “The Limits of the Global Community: The Nixon Administration and Global Environmental Politics,” *Cold War History* 11, no. 4 (November 2011): 489–518.

32 See, for example, Priscilla Roberts, “The Transatlantic American Foreign Policy Elite: Its Evolution in Generational Perspective,” *Journal of Transatlantic Studies* 7, no. 2 (June 2009): 163–183; Stephan Kieninger, “Transformation versus Status Quo: Competing American Concepts of Détente from Kennedy to Nixon,” unpublished dissertation, Mannheim University 2011; Thomas Gijswijt, “Uniting the West: The Bilderberg Group, the Cold War and European Integration, 1952–1966,” unpublished dissertation, Heidelberg University, 2007.

33 Immanuel Wallerstein, *Geopolitics and Geoculture: Essays on the Changing World System* (Cambridge, UK, 1991), 54.

to fade. It may have been ironic that this took place as social forces began to threaten the stability of interstate relations in precisely the manner that Wilson had sought to preempt by inventing a new form of diplomacy set against national chauvinism. Perhaps it took a good ten years or so for it to open a breach and for the breach to take on a domestic character as much as a transnational one. There was, by the late 1950s, the onset of a division among Atlanticists and a distraction by the “winds of change”; by the early 1960s, one can trace these splits to one emerging between official bureaucracies and nongovernmental pressure groups, even within the tiny elite core of Atlantic organizations; and by the mid-1960s, one can see the split harden into a blatant challenge to the unity of both the Alliance and the European movement, and a response by way of such efforts as the CCMS. It would take another ten years or so for the breach to be repaired, after having grown much worse in the early 1970s and reaching its lowest point between 1973 and 1978, then slowly being healed again, ironically, some would say, by the debates over Eurocommunism and Euromissiles, and finally culminating in 1989 with Europe on the cusp of being “whole and free.”

It would go too far to draw a direct line of causation between each and every period: from the interwar effort to recast Wilsonianism on a regional basis through the episodes of intramural jousting across the Atlantic up to the mid- to late 1970s when the region saw a resurgence of Wilsonianism in the negotiation and passage of the Helsinki Final Act and its subsequent review conferences and civil society projects. This latter development also was an ironic one, as it happened, because it was criticized at the time for being a throwback to the geopolitics of the nineteenth century. Both the Helsinki Conference and process were heavily European but also saw an important, even critical, American contribution, despite deep disagreements between some Americans and Europeans over its implementation.<sup>34</sup> They were followed by one final dramatic expression of self-determination, of an appeal to law and morality, and of a redrawing of Europe’s borders, in 1989. The process from beginning to end featured ruptures and continuities; it was continually broken, then repaired and reinvented, at least in the West. Or this is how it appeared at the dawn of the new century, not only from the top down through the prism of events, but also from the bottom up through the human fabric that connected it.

Much of this story was encapsulated in 1967 by the Harmel Report and its attempt to link political consensus, military strength, social

<sup>34</sup> See, for example, Angela Romano, *Détente in Europe to European Détente: How the West Shaped the Helsinki CSCE* (Brussels, 2009); Sarah B. Snyder, “The CSCE and the Atlantic Alliance: Forging a New Consensus in Madrid,” *Journal of Transatlantic Studies* 8, no. 1 (2010): 56–68.

stability, and cultural convergence.<sup>35</sup> The Atlantic Community had survived as the kernel or center of an expanding number of concentric circles, containing more than a few dumbbells. If Atlanticism's crisis, then, was a protracted one linking the passage of generations, concepts, and events, its capacity for renewal and reinvention says much about the thriving of transnational institutions and organizations in the twentieth century. That many of these, in turn, originated as cultural and social projects immediately before and after the First World War — a far greater political crisis than most people had ever experienced — is significant and deserves further study.

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35 See Lawrence S. Kaplan, "The 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Harmel Report," *NATO Review* (Spring 2007); [http://www.nato.int/docu/review/2007/Reviewing\\_Riga/40\\_anniversary\\_Harmel\\_report/EN/index.htm](http://www.nato.int/docu/review/2007/Reviewing_Riga/40_anniversary_Harmel_report/EN/index.htm).

