

Atlanticism as the core 20th century U.S. strategy for internationalism

By Ira Straus

America entered the twentieth century as a new entrant into the sphere of global foreign policy, and it did so beset by doubts. Overcoming the post-1776 habits and doctrines of isolation was no easy matter. Americans tended to equate their freedom with isolation from European conflicts, and in fact nearly lost their freedom during the subsequent world wars as a result of clinging to their isolation until it was almost too late.

The opposite of isolationism was called, generically, internationalism or -- during the world wars -- interventionism; however, its specific contents were Atlanticism and international organization. It was the alliance with England and the subsequent prospect of an infringement on sovereignty by the League of Nations that isolationists abhorred as a betrayal of the heritage of 1776. It was the embrace of Western European countries as organic allies that isolationists analyzed as a violation of the strictures of Washington's Farewell Address against choosing favorites or having permanent friends. American foreign policy was buffeted for nearly half a century by the antinomy between isolationism and internationalism, until a fairly coherent, mature version of Atlanticist internationalism won out conclusively in the 1940s.

Today again, the debates on U.S. foreign policy revolve between antinomies -- unilateralism versus multilateralism, hard power versus soft power. At first blush the new antinomies may seem easy to overcome. One should follow policies that apply both soft and hard power, soft when possible, hard when necessary. What could be more obvious? One should use multilateralism when possible, unilateralism when necessary. Or one should use "effective multilateralism" that corresponds with basic legitimate national goals.

A specific substantive way, however, has to be found to do this; otherwise the contradictions immediately come back into force. Applying hard power can undermine legitimacy; seeking consensus and legitimacy can obstruct power. Multilateralism traditionally requires unanimous consent, which tends to make it ineffective. If it is organized supranationally so that unanimous consent is not required, is it really still "multilateralism"? A "uni-fied" supranational structure, after all, implies a form of "unipolarity".

Atlanticism already served in the 20th century as the main specific substantive strategy for Western elites for reconciling these opposites. It presented itself as a way to combine the two forms of power, hard and soft, and the two forms of action, national and collective. At the same time, it presented itself as a way to overcome a number of other antinomies that stood in the way of cumulative success in international relations -- the divide between peace politics and power politics, between pacifism and patriotism, idealism - realism, freedom - union, independence -

empire, nationalism - internationalism, regionalism - universalism. It was the antithesis of isolationism but was meant to be the synthesis of the other polar concerns.

Atlanticism began as an elite strategy, pioneered in the late 1800s on both sides of the Atlantic. It reached a major but incomplete early success on the diplomatic level in the Anglo-American rapprochement of the 1890s. Its successes in this period proceeded against a backdrop of popular uncertainty, epitomized in the reluctance to enter the world wars as allies of the European democracies with which a partnership or de facto alliance relationship had already been largely consolidated on the diplomatic level. This changed after America joined the wars. The fighting partnership during the wars, their successful outcomes, and the belated realization of the danger in which isolationism in 1939-41 had placed the basic liberties of the modern world -- all served to transmit Atlanticist sentiment to a popular level.

Atlanticism had penetrated deeply enough by the 1940s that it could be consolidated institutionally during the Cold War, a conflict which, from a standpoint of getting the West to organize itself on a basis adequate for the long term and for peacetime, had the virtues of staying cold and lasting a long time. From the Marshall Plan and OEEC to NATO, NPC, OECD, IEA, G-6/7/8, NACC, PFP, EAPC, NPC, NRC... the system of Atlantic institutions grew, and came to play a central role in coordinating the management of global affairs. Elite foreign policy was for several decades made relatively smoothly, against a backdrop of broad if mostly passive popular support. This made possible a practice of bipartisanship on foreign policy matters in the U.S. Congress; this in turn served to shield the elites from the otherwise easy practice of undermining their foreign policy efforts, whether by demagogic appeals to popular patriotic themes or by obstructionism in the Senate where 1/3 could always kill a treaty.

By the 1960s, however, the dragging on of the Cold War became a drain on Western morale, as did the unresolvable moral paradox of basing Western defense on nuclear deterrence i.e. the threat of blowing up the world. It was a posture with an implicit nihilism, and it gave force to the converse nihilism of the counterculture. From the beatniks and the anti-nuclear movement to the New Left and antiwar movement, the cutting edge of youth culture, with strong resonance in mainstream media and academic culture, proceeded to develop themes denouncing mainstream societal norms as unnatural and destructive of the world, Western civilization as imperialist and oppressive, and Western interests as exploitative and unjust.

The decay of morale took a toll on Atlanticism. While passive public support for NATO remained strong, Atlanticist thinking began to fade from public and academic discourse. Atlanticism reverted to an elite strategy -- this time, to be sure, a stable status quo one, with a consolidated place in the sun, rather than one struggling to get its truth recognized. Its academic appendages shrank largely to security studies and to defense of the Atlantic diplomatic status quo. It accused its opponents, who had seized the public limelight, of neo-isolationism; and in fact it was true that there was some overlap with the attitudes that had given rise to the antinomies in the period when America was first making its entry onto the stage of global politics. Some of the old antinomies returned; bipartisanship in Congress collapsed along with the decay of ideological consensus.

After 1989, the fog of existential despair lifted from the West. With the end of European Communism, the survival of freedom no longer depended on threatening to annihilate the world. Atlanticism received new blood from the Eastern Europeans, who embraced it with some of the transformative spirit of its founders a century earlier. It would seem that Atlanticism should have experienced a revival. Nevertheless, in the West it remained a primarily elite and status quo outlook. Opinion polls showed continued strong public support for NATO and for its expansion, but cutting edge cultural elites continued to look in other directions -- often to the global South, now that the global East had abandoned its challenge to the West -- for progress or moral authority in world affairs. The paradox in the situation could be seen in the juxtaposition of these facts: the Eastern Europeans – former enemy states – all wanted to join NATO; NATO did not want to discuss it; the new Yeltsin-Gaydar-Kozyrev government in Russia was called “Atlanticist” by its enemies and asked into NATO; most of NATO did not want Russia, although it was wise enough not to reject it outright; and in America most people never heard of “Atlanticism” and no longer knew what the word meant.

After 1994, NATO belatedly decided to expand. In presenting itself as a force for anchoring and stabilizing democracy rather than a purely Cold War instrument, it showed some potential for revival of the broader vision of Atlanticism, although it fell short in realizing that potential. The cultural weakness of Atlanticism continued, and the old foreign policy antinomies not only remained but grew sharper: America remained largely splenetic in its attitude toward the world, frustrated and impatient with friends and foes alike. The “Vietnam syndrome” went well beyond an allergy to lengthy or costly wars; it was an allergy to all complexity and all long hard efforts that were beset by moral ambiguities and susceptible to moral criticisms. A President of unusual confidence and character such as Reagan was able to bypass the irritable attitude most of the time but not to overcome it. Other presidencies suffered worse from the syndrome, transmuted in one or another form. Today’s highly polarized debate reflects its continuation.

This brief overview of the history shows that Atlanticism, despite difficulties in becoming a popular ideology or identity, had remarkable successes in the 20th century: overcoming isolationism, winning even if at the last moment the world wars, winning the Cold War, and creating permanent structures of international organization that made for collective defense and for a common economic space that stabilized global security and economics. Through these structures, Atlanticism played a decisive role in enabling the West to win the Cold War peacefully; by coalescing the West, its organizational structures multiplied the attractive pull of the West on the Communist countries, winning the “internationalism race” as Prof. Christopher Jones has argued. Beyond this, its economic organizations after 1945 enabled cumulative growth in the world economy, and this, coupled with its security organizations, made possible a return to cumulative progress in political maturity in the industrialized world – in sharp contrast to the regressive trends in politics in the first part of the century. And cumulative progress, coupled with organization of a coherent or unipolar core of world order, meant an overcoming of the traditional contradictions and “impossibility proofs” of international relations.

It behooves us to examine how, in its heyday, Atlanticism overcame the antitheses of international relations, and the role it plays today, and potentially could play tomorrow.

Overcoming antinomies dynamically, by strategy, not by static synthesis

Atlanticism promised to overcome antinomies not by mere compromise or splitting the difference, but by combining their polar values in innovative ways. If the Hegelian phrase may be permitted, it offered a “higher synthesis”.

However, it could not provide an immediate synthesis of everything. The synthesis was not static but dynamic; it was only as a dynamic strategy that there was any real chance of synthesis. Atlanticism could not promise to realize all values of all polarities from the start. Its argument was that neither could any other doctrine, except false utopias; and that it was the best approach available for navigating among the polarities. Atlanticism was to serve as a strategy for progressively moving forward on the polarities, getting us from here to there in practice.

Atlanticism, Democracy, Integration and Federalism: the categories

First, some terminological clarification and ideological etymology.

Atlanticism means reinforcing and working on the basis of the unity of the modern Atlantic countries. This is of course a simplified definition for what was an historical movement and phenomenon; there will be elaboration later.

Atlanticism emerged as a doctrine of international relations in the late 19th century. Its roots go back to the trans-Atlantic relations developed after 1492; the roots of its specific modern form, North Atlanticism (as in “North Atlantic Treaty Organization”), go back to the schism between Spanish and Dutch-English Atlantic expansion in the 1500s.

From its start in the late 1800s, Atlanticism was intimately tied up with **democracy** in the sense of modern representative government. Indeed, at that time, democracy was to be found mainly on the two shores of the North Atlantic.

As a doctrine of international unification, Atlanticism was also intimately tied up with **federalism**, a form of political union seen as potentially applicable to the international sphere. We will thus be looking at “federalism” as well as “Atlanticism” as a strategy for overcoming the antinomies.

“International integration” was a subject that did not yet exist in the late 1800s; it was a phrase that became popular in the 1950s to define a field that would combine functionalism and federalism, as two approaches to deepening internationalism beyond the intergovernmental form that fully respects national sovereignty. What existed and was attractive in the late 1800s was federalism. The results of the US Civil War had just confirmed the staying power of federalism in uniting vast territories. The war had also shown the destructiveness of modern warfare, a matter the federalists of the time related to the ever growing technological capabilities and interdependence of the modern world. Technological-communications civilization in turn shrank the distance between the modern societies -- most of them still concentrated around the North

Atlantic -- making feasible a union across vast expanses of countries that in previous centuries could not be united and indeed had divided from one another.

A theorist of biological and social evolution, John Fiske -- who, in addition to his Atlanticism and federalism, was the popularizer of Darwinism in America -- interpreted federalism as the latest evolved development of representative government, itself an evolution forward from classical democracy, and in turn presaging a further evolution beyond nationwide federal democratic government to international federal government and eventual global unity. It followed that this evolution of government upward to the international plane would have to begin among the Atlantic societies where representative democracy and federalism had already taken root.

Federalism was analyzed by Fiske as synthesizing the antinomies of cooperation and competition. It provided for full sustenance of diversity of ideas and initiatives alongside solidarity as citizens of a common whole and a shared government suppressing any militarized forms of political competition: it was a form of unity that avoided uniformity and degenerative evolution¹. More broadly, Fiske conceived of social evolution and progress as consisting of the evolution of ever more sophisticated forms of social and governmental structure, at the heart of which lay ever more sophisticated combinations of competition and cooperation, these both being necessary and functional aspects of human nature. Modern federalism was thus the most advanced achievement of socio-political evolution.

This is, to be sure, a very different picture than the one people nowadays have of “Social Darwinism”, which is usually thought of as a matter of carrying competition to the extreme and at the expense of cooperation. I do not wish here to enter into the debate on the meaning of Social Darwinism in economic policy, but in view of the amount of passion that has been invested in this aspect of the matter and the huge literature expended on theories that attribute international conflict to the dog-eat-dog competition of the marketplace, a certain digression may be necessary here. In the minds of mainstream proponents of market economics from Adam Smith onward, the market was always a synthesis of cooperation and competition in which the primary relation -- between buyer and seller -- was cooperation or agreeing on an interchange for mutual benefit; the competition -- between seller and seller, or buyer and buyer -- was to serve to keep the terms of the cooperative interchange honest (minimizing the amount of exploitation or

¹ Ludwig Dehio, the German historian of culture and international relations, later observed in *The Precarious Balance: Four Centuries of the European Power Struggle* (NY: Vintage/Random House, 1965) that Anglo-American federalism, by coupling civilization in its scale with retention of culture and diversity in its parts, had bypassed the civilization-culture antinomy -- the view that the progress of civilization and pacification and central government destroys culture and initiative and sets society on a path to mass-imitative mechanism and degeneration -- that formed the basis for the counterrevolutionary extremist 20th century development within German romantic conservatism. He made this observation after Euro-Atlantic integration had gotten underway in the postwar years; it was a kind of belated acknowledgement by the German intellectual tradition of the error of its ways in despising the modern syntheses and reaffirming the antitheses of premodern political philosophy about the eventual degeneration of all political systems, made the more melodramatic by mixing it in with a simplified Darwinism that glorified conflict and demonized cooperation as degenerative. Rousseau had laid the foundations for the romantic preference for the intense classical direct democracy and patriotic city-state liberty over the more diffuse and individualistic liberty of modern representative and federal government; Benjamin Constant had answered for the moderns and for representative government; Edward Freeman, a British scholar contemporary to Fiske, had carried the answer farther in his *History of Federalism*.

shortchanging of either party) and “competitive” (minimizing waste and maximizing the gain for net social product). Affirmation of the value only of competition not cooperation was an extreme, not the mainstream, within market economics, and always understood itself as a minority prescription in opposition to the prevalent “corruption”, not as a description of existing market reality. “Social Darwinists” in the popularly understood sense of the phrase did exist, but had peripheral not organic importance for market economics – and, for that matter, for Darwinian-based sociology. Everyone was Darwinist, not just the ultra-individualists. The socialists in the late 1800s and early 1900s were also Darwinist; they simply went to the opposite extreme from the individualists: instead of predicting individual victory for the more competitive entrepreneur, they predicted that societies that eliminated all major forms of competition and replaced them with organic cooperation would be more efficient and win against market societies in the collective-group competition for survival. Both were apostles of competition; the socialists simply favored collective instead of individual competition. It turned out that they were wrong about which form of society would prove more efficient, perhaps because they misunderstood the market as an extremist system with only one value, competition not cooperation, and in choosing the mirror opposite of their image of it, ended up with the less sophisticated system themselves. Under socialism, cooperation was massively organized but coercive and dishonest: there were not adequate competitive incentives for efficient labor, and not adequate uses of competition for feedback loops and corrective functions on such matters as pricing, information, verification, and corruption. An interesting corollary to this mistake was the socialist argument that an organically cooperative society in its domestic structure would also be more cooperative internationally and would lead to consensual world government. In practice socialist regimes proved more warlike than the market societies, because of their intense nationalization of economic life, turning each international exchange into a political decision, and incapable of integration except by the harshest ancient imperial methods. Meanwhile integration proceeded more effectively in the market-based Atlantic world. It would seem that there was too much passion and imbalance at all levels of the socialist prescription, tending toward total cooperation on the domestic level and total competition between nationalized societies; and that what was needed rather was a balanced system with arrangements intertwining solidarity and competition on both levels, domestic and international.

This brings us back to our subjects: federalism and Atlanticism as syntheses and as strategies.

The Federalist syntheses

1. Democracy, territorial expanse, central sovereignty, and stability

Modern federation, as pioneered in the U.S. Constitution of 1787, was already an impressive synthesis of what in its absence had long been considered irreconcilable opposites. All of classical political theory had viewed democracy as incompatible with a large expanse of territory, and so for that matter had most of the generation of American revolutionaries who had just fought for local independence from Imperial rule. Democracy and stable longevity of government were also considered opposites since classical times. For these reasons, democracy had been in dispute for two millennia.

The U.S. Constitution reconciled these opposites, providing an elected central government for a vast territory. In The Federalist No. 10 Madison provided a theoretical argument that, thanks to representation and federalism, a geographically vast democracy could be more stable than a small one and avoid the fractious instability of classical democracies.

In practice, the new form of federation in the U.S. made a success of democracy as had never before been experienced, reversing its hitherto negative reputation. It also made a success of federalism as never before.

Prior to 1787, federalism was considered incompatible with the modern sovereign central state, which, after the long chaotic medieval era, had brought the deeply appreciated benefits of peace to extended territories and cumulative economic growth. The U.S. Constitution established a new form of federalism in which the central government effectively performed the same functions as other modern sovereign states, without ceasing to be in some significant respects federal. Hamilton was the great proponent of the sovereignty of the Federal government under the Constitution.

2. Realism and idealism

Federalism in its modern form also combined international realism with international idealism. Hamilton's The Federalist No. 6 is a classic exposition of Hobbesian realist theory of international relations in opposition to the Antifederalists with their democratic peace theory; yet it is expounded from a standpoint not of static realism but of expansive, almost romantic federalism, in which people can unite and form the social contract internationally, not to be sure in the almost orgasmic fashion in which Hobbes depicts humans banding together desperately to form a society, but on a more Lockean or perhaps Humeian basis of deliberation; indeed the debate over the Constitution was laid out by Hamilton in The Federalist No. 1 as the occasion for deciding the question of whether humans could form government by deliberation and choice or would always have to rely on force and accident. In the next century, romantic theorists of social organicism would deny the entire idea of the social contract as a myth about prehistory; its defenders would point to the formation of the American Federal Union as one instance where something rather close to the Lockean theoretical model of a social contract was carried out in practice. Organicists would answer that it was war that united Americans, and the contract was but a convenient myth; contractualists would answer that there were wars strewn throughout history, but democratic unions were rare indeed. If the contract contained an element of myth, it was a very fruitful myth; it was fortunate that the American Founders believed in it and used it as a model for achieving convergent action toward Union, and that the public could recognize the action as legitimate.

Subsequently, international federalists continued this marriage of the realism of Hobbes with the Hamilton-refined social contractualism of Hobbes. What is usually known as "international realism" imbibes only the first half of Hobbes, the pessimistic part that describes the logic of conflict between independent actors, quotes Thucydides and implies that war and balance of power are eternal; but this is a truncated Hobbes, and perhaps a truncated realism, forgetting the second half of Hobbes in which he is a theorist -- and advocate -- of establishing social peace

through a social contract and a modern sovereign state. Both halves of Hobbes were upheld by Hamilton and by his international federalist successors.

3. Pacifism and patriotism; peace and national power

As a theory of progressively extending the public peace, international federalism was intimately connected with the peace movement which was also born in the 1800s and has usually had far greater popular visibility. However, much of the rest of the peace movement has tended toward opposition to its country's power, opposition to fighting particular wars, and often, pacifism and refusal of citizenship obligations to defend its country. On the extremes, this has led to an adversarial posture toward the mainstream norms of society, as a logical deduction from a view of the role of one's country in the world as pernicious.

Federalism took a decidedly different approach: it supported organized central power as a key instrument of peace, and it upheld citizenship obligations as they key to the stability of modern government and its ability to serve as an instrument of peace. Its goal was to extend citizenship obligations and the other virtues of patriotism, not abolish them. At the same time, it criticized patriotism and support for the law as self-contradictory if limited to applying within national borders and lacking a supranational complement: it meant upholding the law and use of force to suppress violence within the country while applying force without any adequate law, i.e. violently, outside the country.

Federalists managed to share in full the critique of power politics and of nationalism by pacifists, without sharing the adversarial posture toward their country's power in the world. Thus the formulation of Philip Kerr, Lord Lothian, a leading federalist since the early 1900s (as an Imperial functionary he helped form the union of formerly warring South African states, later he headed the Rhodes Trust, and he died as British Ambassador to the U.S. in the first stages of World War II), in the title of his most important work: "Pacifism is Not Enough, Nor Patriotism Either" (1935). The federalist goal was to extend the virtues of patriotism to the international level and thus transcend its vices, while embracing the values of pacifism without embracing its vices.

Federalism was at times close to the mainstream of the peace movement, at other times far away from it. In 1938-40, when pacifism was discredited by the results of appeasement of Hitler, Federal Union emerged as the leading sector or cutting edge of peace-ism, as shown by Martin Ceadel in his book on the British peace movement². Earlier, during World War I, the League to Enforce Peace, a proto-federalist movement for world organization, was a massive movement. Still earlier, at the very founding of international federalism, when the peace movement was also inchoate, there was a close overlap. Andrew Carnegie, who as the wealthiest man in the world gave peace-ism a great boost, putting a large share of his money into the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, was a federalist, writing a book on union of the English-speaking

² Ceadel made a helpful distinction between "pacifism", the refusal to fight, and "pacifism", or all doctrines that give a high valuation to peace and all movements for peace. He criticized trenchantly the tendency in much of the peace movement and indeed much of the public discourse to equate the two and brand all non-pacifists as anti-peace. However, he or his publishers conceded to general usage in the title of his book: *Pacifism in Britain, 1914-1945: the Defining of a Faith* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1980).

peoples. John Fiske's work was endorsed by Benjamin Trueblood, head of the American peace society, whose book mentioned three valid and complementary paths in international federalism: European Federalism, English-speaking Union (what later evolved into Atlantic Union), and ultimate World Federalism.

However, there were also periods when the peace movement culture diverged sharply from federalist culture. The divergence has on the whole grown with time, particularly during the Cold War when the peace movement, aligned with the Left, aimed its hostility primarily at the Western side of the Cold War, unlike World War II when it aimed its hostility more against the Nazi side. The European and Atlantic federalist movements were during both periods aligned primarily with the West as the proximately integrable core of the future world order. Much of the Left welcomed it in the first period but turned against it in the second; this was one of the reasons for the organizational schism of world federalism from European and Atlantic federalism after 1943 (there was also a very different reason not related to a Left orientation: the atomic explosions of 1945, which made it more urgent to resolve problems globally right away). Euro-Atlantic integration, which claimed to be laying the foundation for a future unity with a liberated East, was widely criticized during the Cold War as driving the Eastern bloc together and exacerbating the division of the world. The debate would seem to be settled by the end of the Cold War, taking place as it did not by a neutral accommodation but by the dissolution of European Communism and by the efforts of all the successor states to join the Euro-Atlantic order. Still the gap between the two peace cultures remains deep. Indeed, it has sometimes been venomous on a personal level -- a century ago, Mahan despised Carnegie, despite their both being federalists and Anglo-American unionists, because Carnegie identified with the peace movement, and Mahan associated that with pacifism and enmity to the very powers he wanted to unite. At the same time, the schism should not be exaggerated. There was always an overlap between the two movements in membership and thinking. Even during the Cold War this overlap was never completely severed.

4. Freedom and union

The reconciliation of freedom with union is one of federalism's crowning glories. A Federal Union can be much deeper than traditional imperial unions, carrying a more powerful shared loyalty; it can cover a vast space without running into traditional center-periphery dynamics or the enfeeblement of the power-efficacy of the center as one gets farther away from it geographically. And, far from compromising freedom, it extends the space of individual freedom across its terrain, as well as providing greater space for diversity and minority rights than small democracies. As such, it not only reconciles but enhances freedom and union, raising both to a higher level.

A problem in this reconciliation, leading us from federalism generically to Atlanticism...

However, there remains a fair question whether the freedom of a society might be lost through a deep union, no matter that it is federal, with other societies that do not share the same basic characteristics or same goals and vision of freedom.

European and Atlantic federalism have resolved this by choosing a field of members bearing a sufficient commonality of characteristics and goals, including a modern European-style society, a modern industrial market-based economy, and a modern liberal democracy. It can be argued how tight the standards have to be and how much they can be stretched; but the costs of stretching too far can be seen in the French and Dutch rejection of the EU Constitution, the decisive motive for which rejection, it is coming to be understood, consisted of fear of the EU elites' intention of admitting Turkey into the Union. This was more a fear of social destabilization due to immigration and wage differentials than of direct loss of democracy through differences in ideals, but the consequences could be the same.

World federalism proposes to resolve the question through a looser federation, which does not amalgamate the societies into a common society with a common citizenship free to move about throughout the terrain or to vote equally, but nevertheless strengthens the capabilities for common global action by enhancing the UN's voting procedures; in most versions its proposals really would be more fairly described not as federation but as confederation, with the maximum proposed at the present time limited to a "triadic" form of voting in which the wealthy democracies of the world, or any major portion such as half of them, would retain a collective veto in return for giving up the individual national veto in the Security Council. This however reopens the question of whether such a veto-laden global confederation would be adequate for managing the urgent problems of interdependence -- the very problems that formed the logical argument for the world federalists' separation from the European and Atlantic federalists in the 1943-47 period and for their insistence on world federation as a proximate rather than ultimate goal.

Atlantic federalism proposes to evolve toward an ultimately deeper world federation by forming in this period a deep federation among compatible societies and then gradually absorbing other countries into it as they become compatible. This leaves a similar question: how fast can societies become compatible, and, in a world in which the Euro-Atlantic grouping today -- even in its most extended form, the OECD plus OSCE -- comprises only about 20% of the population of the whole, could the remainder ever be included in any relevant timeframe without undermining the necessary imbalances on the side of democratic stability?

It seems that neither Atlantic federalism nor globalism can fully solve the urgent requirements of world peace, for similar reasons: navigating from different directions, both run up against the same deep divisions between societies on the global scale. Globalists run up against this immediately and so water down their proposals, Atlanticists gradually and so water down their pace of reaching the global level. The two approaches, combined, could do better, and the "concentric circles" doctrine of Atlanticism offers to combine them, but is still far from able to give a guarantee of world peace and survival. The same modern social and physical technologies that have created an urgency of needs of deep world unity have also heightened the division between societies that obstruct such unity. There is no adequate solution; Atlantic federalism's maximum claim is that it is, with the help of its concentric circles doctrine, the least inadequate.

The additional, specifically Atlanticist syntheses

5. Independence and empire

Freedom is associated in most patriotic minds with national sovereignty and independence; union sounds like its betrayal, irrespective of what it does for individual liberty. At the same time, there is a great historic tradition of empire, which though out of style in contemporary rhetoric, used to levy just as strong moral claims against the advocates of nationalism and independence as the latter do nowadays against empire. Federalism is an at least partial reconciliation of the two, providing the potential for the expanse of empire while providing for the substance of freedom of its member individuals and some part of the substance of freedom for its member societies, although not for their sovereign independence.

There is another aspect of this, which provides partial answers to the questions left hanging in (4) above. In what has been called -- particularly by its opponents in the Wallerstein school of neo-Marxists -- the modern "world system", the Atlantic grouping is understood to sit at the core of the entire world system, and to have sat there for several centuries, with roots going back to 1492. This world system is typically branded "imperialism" by its opponents, although Wallerstein at the same time attributes its successful emergence to the absence of a unifying empire within the Atlantic heartland.

One would only have to make a slight twist in the language of "world systems theory" to say that there is only one serious empire in the classical sense -- that is to say, a world empire project -- in the modern world: the Atlantic one. And this would not be too great an exaggeration in fact. The actual Atlantic empires, first the Spanish later the British, were projects of leading empires for the world; all the other empires -- the German, the Russian, the Soviet, the Japanese, the Chinese -- were at best regional empires, acting complementary within their limited sphere to the global expansion of Atlantic Europe; at worst, they were projects for national and regional insulation, sometimes carried to the point of autarchy, against the leading Atlantic sector of the world.³ The anti-imperialist rhetoric of the latter empires is, on this interpretation, consistent with their essence on the world scale, even if easily ridiculed as hypocritical in view of their often harsh internal imperial rule; the anti-imperialism of some of the Atlantic countries -- American opposition to European imperialism up into the 1960s, European attacks on American hegemony or imperialism since then -- is, by contrast, paradoxical, since it is directed primarily against their own world empire-project.

Atlanticism, as developed since the late 1800s, would in this theory be understood as a project for unifying the core countries of the Atlantic-led world system, with a view to rendering their global hegemony consistent and sustainable. In so doing, it would overcome the core contradiction that Wallerstein attributes to its essence; for Wallerstein, working on the same view of an irreconcilable antinomy as the proponents of an absolute contrast between competition and cooperation, or culture and civilization, holds that the creativity of Atlantic civilization is due to its disunity and combative internecine competition. Atlanticism holds, by contrast, that its mutual

³ Lewis Feuer, in his last book, *Imperialism and the Anti-Imperialist Mind* (Buffalo, NY: Prometheus Books, 1986), revived the classic idea of empire -- its grand tradition, so to speak, from Alexander the Great to Caesar to the British Empire -- as an optimistic world project, while arguing that backward-looking empires, with their defensiveness and autarchy, were really closer to the anti-imperialist tradition. The highest philosophical exponent of the imperialist tradition was Dante Alighieri, *De Monarchia*, part of which has been republished in English under the title "On World Government".

structures of cooperation, up to an including a common sovereignty organized along principles of federalism, are compatible with and indeed serve to enhance its creativity and initiative. As such, the Atlantic “empire”, which has held the world leadership but managed it inconsistently since the 1600s, would become a consistent world-leadership project.

This in fact has been the view shared by the most important Atlanticists ever since the 1890s. In the initial, “Britannic” stage -- Imperial Federation, English-speaking Union, Curtis, Lothian, the Round Table group -- it explicitly emphasized “empire” as a reality and a project; it aimed at stabilizing the world empire-project of the British Empire by federally uniting its core “old Commonwealth” members and then reuniting them with the revolted member America, so as to give it a base of operations more adequate to its scope. In the second stage -- Streit, Federal Union, Atlantic Union -- it emphasized “leadership” not “empire”, underlining the systemic role of the Atlantic countries as holding collectively an overwhelming hegemony in the world order (or world disorder), and seeking sufficiently efficient and reliable unity among them to render their leadership consistent and order-inducing. This was the perspective underlying the efforts of the main progenitors of the Euro-Atlantic institutional constructs after 1945, although never explicitly embedded within those institutions, and often forgotten since. In both stages, Britannic and Atlantic, it envisaged a long evolution from the union of the core Atlantic societies to the integration of the larger populations in the imperial or global periphery; in both cases, it had the European empires at hand as institutions for mediating that evolution and buying time.

The actual Euro-Atlantic institutions, however, emerged later, after 1945, when the empires were already gravely weakened, and the institutions had no active relation to the European empires; rather, they sat passively watching them disappear. Undoubtedly the institutions emerged more easily by skirting the imperial issues; it was enough trouble to integrate the defenses and societies of the metropolitan core of the Euro-Atlantic world, without the added difficulty of integrating their imperial -- and in the case of America, deep-set anti-imperial -- perspectives. The Suez crisis, when American anti-imperialism led to harsh action against its major allies -- rocked the Atlantic Alliance and took the wind out of it for a long time, but did not kill it. Out of area cooperation never made much progress in NATO during the Cold War, but was always on the agenda, and finally began to move forward after the Cold War ended, with common military actions in the Balkans in the 1990s and, on a lesser scale, farther afield in Afghanistan and Iraq after 2001. The basic “old Atlanticist” program of collective global leadership thus remains in force and has been advancing, even if, as always in history, much slower than advocated and, it would seem, dangerously slower than needed; meanwhile, however, its old assumption of inheriting empires spanning most of the world, as instruments for global management and buying time, has faded into history. It thus has more tasks to manage with fewer instruments than anticipated. With the advance of technology into weapons of mass destruction, not really envisaged in any of the original Atlanticist writings from the 1890s to 1939 -- although they all envisaged increasing interdependence and increasing destructiveness of warfare in general terms -- it also has less time.

6. Unilateralism and multilateralism, unipolarity and multipolarism

Multilateralism is reliance on “multilateral” international institutions. Unilateralism is reliance on old-fashioned independent national action. The term is usually employed pejoratively because we are in a post-1914 world where collective institutions exist, and where separate national action has been seen to bear an enormous risk of bringing chaos and destruction, along with other negative consequences, often unintended and self-defeating.

The League of Nations was the classical instance of a multilateral institution, and it proved unreliable. Placing reliance on the unreliable is unwise. Placing reliance on separate national action, with frequent self-defeating consequences, is also unwise. The conundrum seems unresolvable, as long as we are dealing with only classical, multilateral, intergovernmental institutions on the international level. One can safely enough say that multilateralism should be the first resort, unilateralism the last resort, but as long as multilateralism is not very effective, the last resort may recur frequently.

Functionalism and federalism aimed to create different kinds of institutions. The new institutions were to operate, not on a basis of negotiations among independent powers equilibrated in a classically multipolar balance of power, but rather on the basis of a “fusion” of their powers and purpose (Monnet), with common planning for the fused powers in order to realize the fused purposes. This would constitute a common structure of real substance, a sort of collective unipolarity. Reliance on them would make sense: they would be working reliably, with a real and constant power to their back, rather than shuttling back and forth among the shifting sands of a multipolar balance and hoping for powers to be lent by member nations at the last moment for an urgent purpose.

However, as we have seen, not all the world could be united, at least not in any near timeframe, into deep common institutions. Atlanticism answered this problem with a two-tiered concept of unipolarity: powerful collective institutions among the Atlantic democracies as the lower tier, eliminating their unnecessary habits of mutual multipolar competition and constituting them into a unipolar structure; which structure would in turn, by the very fact of the new-found coherence of the Atlantic powers with all their economic and geopolitical assets, hold an unchallengeable hegemony on the global scale, providing a coherent leadership of the world order and providing a fairly reliable force to stand behind the global institutions on the occasions -- likely to be most of the time -- when they accepted the orientation of the unipole.

The federalism of Madison and Hamilton, despite its being typically understood in a language of “checks and balances” which sounds very much like classical multilateralism and indeed multipolarism, in fact eliminated the multipolar checks and balances of the pre-1787 confederation, and replaced them with a unipolar structure of common power, with an effective executive, the general guidance of which was in turn handed to a legislature and electorate within which there was to be a broad pluralistic balance of ideas and influences. One might speak of it as a “multilateralism of influence within a unipolarity of power”. The Atlantic federalism of the 20th century retained this approach, finding a way to apply it to the international and global levels, albeit needing a mixed two-tiered arrangement rather than applying it pure and simple.

European federalism also retained the Hamiltonian unipolarist approach for its internal ordering; the multilateral balance of influence within its common institutions does not detract from the

unipolarity of orientation of all of its members, a unipolarity which is organized both on the EU level and, militarily, on the Atlantic level. Despite this, a substantial part of the EU has joined France in arguing for an opposite, multipolarist philosophy when it comes to external, global affairs.

In the contemporary debate over multilateralism and unipolarism, centered around the war in Iraq and U.S. “unipolarity”, Tony Blair said that the goal of Europe should be multilateralism not multipolarism. In making the distinction, he implied that his goal was not a classical multilateralism but one that accommodated to the reality of unipolarity, with a shared orientation of the great powers rather than the equilibration as the basis for action and for bargaining. France, its national elite speaking with almost a single voice, answered that multilateralism can be achieved only by multipolarity, in order to restrain American unilateralism. There was a logical leap in this; multipolarity would not guarantee multilateralism but rather would distribute more equitably the capabilities for unilateral action; it would at best guarantee greater equity in the various powers’ reliance on or divergence from multilateralism. Javier Solana, who before moving over to the EU, had headed the unipolar Atlantic military structure whose cohesion underlay the very possibility of an effective confederal EU, has insisted in EU documents on the term “multilateralism” being qualified by the adjective “effective”, which takes away the anti-American sting; as we have seen, it implies a degree of functional or federal unipolar underpinning that moves outside of the range of classical multilateralism. Nevertheless, neither party to this debate -- neither within Europe nor between Europe and America -- has risen above the base-line antithesis based on treating unipolarity simply as “American unipolarism”; none of them have recognized that the actual unipole on the global scale has been around for most of a century and is Atlantic, with America’s role as a unipolar leader within this unipole. In other words, unipolarity is three-tiered, instead of two-tiered as proposed by the early Atlanticists: an intergovernmental global system; a part-organized split-level Euro-Atlantic system as its unipolar core, using a mix of federal, functional, and intergovernmental structures to organize itself; and a fully-organized American federation as the inner core of the unipole, providing cohesive leadership filling in for many of the holes in the institutions. The virtues and vices of American power, and of its unilateral uses substituting for consensus, could be discussed more rationally within this framework, along with more viable prescriptions for making multilateral institutions effective. It would become evident, within this framework, that a relevant prescription for more completely embedding American power would speak of enhancing the collective structures on the Atlantic level, not just relying more on the global structures.

7. Nationalism - regionalism – universalism

Nationalism and universalism stand as apparent opposites, with regionalism as a compromise in-between. Atlantic federalism, however, stands not fully with regionalism but with a reconciliation between regionalism and universalism.

Nationalism offered the reality of national-state power, a status quo that could seemingly be upheld without the difficulties of change in loyalty and habit; yet nationalism was an unstable emotional brew, always tending to spill over, no matter whether outward in aggressiveness or inward in isolationism and autarchy, to upset the status quo. And nation-based power politics,

even when pursued with relative calm and rationality, entailed an incessant posture of threat and risk of war, a problem compounded by the number of independent actors and the growing destructiveness of armaments. World War I led to the widespread conclusion that nationalism was no longer acceptable as the primary foundation for world politics and that the peace must be organized.

Universalism offered a direct logical solution to the global problems, and offered an equal and complete renunciation of nationalism. But uniting all the nations of the world proved too hard a task in the League of Nations, except in reaching the most superficial level of unity; power politics continued unabated beneath the surface of League activities, and the fundamental realities remained those of nationalism. Indeed, the League, though it had substantial popular support, did not substantially penetrate national sovereignty or amend, restrict, or supplement national loyalties with global loyalties.

Since the main realities remained national, meaning that power politics struggles remained decisive and negligence of them could have disastrous consequences, many people felt constrained to return to nationalism in its various forms, including isolationism, rather than continue in the clouds of League internationalism. Yet the retreat into nationalism proved an even more destabilizing factor: in a world of increasing interdependence, where national borders had already been overspilt by transnational problems and by national policies, there was no innocent return to a “normal” nationalism, but an ideologically inflamed regression into an extremist nationalism, one that promised radical national policies that would be so powerful in their effects that they would overcome even the global problems that might otherwise seem far beyond the reach of the national state. National Socialism and international Socialism were in this regard two sides of the same coin; the one proposed to puff up nationalist sentiment and organize a nationalist ideological uniformity to an overpowering level, the other to organize national economic unity and a socialist ideological uniformity within the nation to an equally overpowering level. No less an international socialist than Trotsky traced these two forms of totalitarianism to a desperate attempted sublimation into nationalism of the international problems that were in reality intractable to the nation state.

And so nationalism again failed, just as universalist internationalism had failed. And regionalism, while potentially useful for managing regional problems and overcoming intra-regional power politics, was also potentially a builder of just another, bigger nationalism competing in the same sort of multipolar power politics struggles that had led to World War I.

Clarence Streit, a war veteran and New York Times correspondent at the League and author of the main manifesto of contemporary Atlanticism in 1939⁴, described colorfully the torment of internationalists in the early decades of the twentieth century: with frustration as its mainspring, he said, the pendulum has swung back and forth between nationalism and universalism. Streit proposed a point for the pendulum finally to come to rest: an Atlantic Union that would be “regional” in that it was started out not universal but with a group of countries with shared characteristics, yet universalist in that it could let in other countries on a basis of universal principles. It would have, as its inner mainspring, an idea of serving as a dynamic “nucleus”

⁴ Streit, Clarence K., *Union Now: A Proposal for a Federal Union of the Democracies of the North Atlantic*, New York: Harper, 1939

union, set up in such a way as to give it a natural tendency to evolve over time beyond its starter countries to universality.

During the “critical decade” of postwar America and Europe, the pendulum did in fact settle down. Euro-Atlantic integrative ideas and policies prevailed in the American and Western European elites and governments. The results were no longer primarily destructive or disillusioning, as with the nationalism and universalism of the preceding four decades, but primarily heartening and stabilizing. The construction could thus grow cumulative. This may in great part be credited to the development by Streit and others of compromise and synthesis perspectives: compromises such as European regional Union, and syntheses such as Atlantic super-regional Union as a “nucleus” for gradual approximation of universalism.

However, the pendulum never stopped swinging entirely, and in the decades since the 1960s, when Atlanticism faded out of public view and Atlantic integration survived only on status quo momentum, the swings have again grown greater in amplitude. New bouts of isolationism and unilateralism were detected on Left and Right in America, and periods when bashing of international institutions has seemed to predominate over reform of them. Nevertheless, the swings are still not nearly as extreme as the swings of the period 1910-1940; the Euro-Atlantic constructions endure despite many a prediction of their death, as does the global UN system; even the cumulative progress in many respects continues.

So let us consider, finally, what was right and what was wrong in the nucleus idea. As a reconciliation of the antinomies, hard power and soft, peace and patriotism, freedom and union, has it been a powerful enough synthesis, adequate to the needs of both ends of these equations?

8. The “Atlantic nucleus” synthesis of universalism and regionalism

The idea of the nucleus was this: to unite some countries now, selecting those countries that were compatible and whose union would serve to bring coherence to the core of the world order, and draw in other countries later. Not all countries could unite at once, or even in the very near term, but the Atlantic democracies were ripe for Union: they had mature experience as representative democracies, they had an entire series of sociological and historical commonalities, they were already deeply interconnected economically, they had nothing worth fighting against each other about, and the major powers among them had been allies in the existential battles of World War I alliance, with roots of their alliance going back much earlier. If they united federally, they would immediately form a core of stability for the world order: their Union would have such military predominance as to deter any aggressor such as Hitler from hoping to win by war, and would have such economic predominance as to provide a working global currency and secure the foundations for crisis-free development of global trade. In fact they already were the core of the world order -- as New York Times correspondent at the League of Nations, Streit had observed that the League worked effectively when, and only when, Britain, France, and America (despite its non-member status) agreed -- but they were failing to lead in a coherent, world-ordering direction due to their inability as independent countries to achieve consistent coordination. Once an international Union was in place and held the core assets of the world order, other countries would want to join. They would be encouraged to aspire to this, and could be allowed to join upon achieving an adequate level of democratic maturity. The Union would thus grow gradually

to universality: for freedom and democracy were not regional cultural characteristics but universal human potentialities and aspirations.

Just in case anyone answered -- as many did -- with the easy argument that this was a culturally biased view, Streit observed that one could not imagine free people overthrowing their governments in the hope of joining a union of authoritarian regimes, but one could imagine an unfree people overthrowing its dictatorship in order to join a union of free societies. Here cultural relativism might seem to have met its match in common sense, although in much of academic international relations discourse, the paradigm of realism, with its relativistic premise of equally valid nationalisms and equally valid power politics of all states, tended to suppress the ability to perceive this point of common sense for the next half-century. So did the paradigm of socialism, with its deprecation of the universality of Western bourgeois democracy. So did the paradigm of pacifism with its adversarial postures toward the power and ideology of its own country; like realism, it warned against the arrogance, naivete and belligerence of the ideologists of freedom. It took the experience of 1989-91 to overcome the combined predominance of these paradigms, which were united in the matter of denying the universal validity of the Atlantic nucleus. By then, ironically, the emergence of the Third World had long since provided a different and more plausible basis for doubting the universal applicability of the Western experience.

Streit in fact presented two scenarios for enlargement: to the industrialized autocracies, and to the colonial world. The industrialized autocracies would have to throw off their dictatorships, and he indicated that he expected them to do so in a reasonably near timeframe, with Germany, Italy and Japan likely to be in the first wave that would throw off its dictatorships and join the Union after the latter was formed, and Eastern Europe and Russia likely to be in the second wave. The colonial world, by contrast, was expected to ripen gradually to democratic maturity: the Union would encourage democratic development there; would adopt a Northwest Ordinance-type policy for admission of the entire area; would, by the hope engendered, transform the colonial mentality and trump the nationalist pressures for independence; and would duly upgrade the status of the ripening countries by evolution.

Streit's schema for the industrialized autocracies came true like clockwork, even without a full federal Union. On this level, the synthesis proved powerful indeed. However, his schema for the colonial world was impossible without a Union thorough enough to subsume the then-extant imperial structures and give the colonies hope of evolving into membership, and might have been impossible even in that case. Instead, independence came everywhere in the colonial world, bringing new nations, and new nationalisms that tended to deepen and "nativize" further with each passing generation.

Odds kept fading farther and farther for a reunion of the ex-colonized countries into the emerging union of the former imperial metropolitan countries, and not only because of the entrenchment of nationalism. The population imbalance between the poor ex-colonized countries and the rich ex-colonial masters widened dramatically over the years; in order to achieve the ratios necessary for a non-destabilizing reunion, the imbalance would have had to move far in the opposite direction. The obstacle to union posed by this imbalance could in principle be overcome if the gap in wealth were overcome, but this is a very long-term prospect. Thus far, while the

gross economic growth of the global South has been more rapid in recent decades than that of the global North (a fact which is at least worthy of note for those who have taken the anti-globalization rhetoric at face value and assumed that the North has been growing at the expense of the South), the per capita growth of the North remains greater, due to the continued increase in the number of “capitas” in the South. If recent trends of major slowdown of population growth in the South were to lead eventually to equalization of population change curves between North and South -- and that will take a long time, given the delayed effects of fertility reduction in Southern populations which remain quite youthful and in their prime -- and afterwards technological advancement and economic growth lead to a reduction of the per capita wealth gap by several orders of magnitude, then the labor forces and societies may finally become integrable between North and South without destabilization. Looking at the progress of science, anything seems possible; looking at every sociological, demographic, and economic indicator, it seems a very long way off.

Until then, the “nucleus” model for integration of the South into the North seems inapplicable, except for a small number of countries -- thus far mostly a few small countries in East Asia -- that seem to have managed the passage from South to North and are de facto a part of the “Economic Atlantic”, such as South Korea and Japan which are in fact members of the OECD.

If the nucleus-absorption model is not fully relevant, there is greater relevance in the other side of the “nucleus” coin: concentric circles and the nucleus-core of world order.

The Atlantic Union, we may recall, was to serve as a stabilizing core of world order, providing the military and economic security for cumulative development in member and non-member societies alike. This prospect was contrasted by Streit to the destabilization of the early 1900s -- world wars and depressions -- that encouraged Communist and fascist reactions among emerging countries outside the original, democratically-committed Atlantic coastal area.

Moreover, the Atlantic was to be only one of the “circles” of international unity; the American Union would continue inside it, a European Union would be possible inside it, e.g. for the more intimate harmonization of homeland security measures and economic policies that is needed among contiguous countries, and more to the point, a reformed global League of Nations -- what became the United Nations -- would continue to exist as an outer circle encompassing the Atlantic Union. Here in his prescription, as earlier in his diagnosis, Streit relied on his observation that the League had worked when Britain, France, and America agreed. United in a Federal Union, those countries would always agree; the prospects for the reformed League, or UN, would be greatly improved.

The point still largely holds, with the proviso that Russia must also be integrated and China led along in order for the united Atlantic grouping to lead today’s Security Council consistently. However, the point would need greater emphasis today, since most of the world is at a great temporal distance from the prospect of joining the nucleus. This suggests a need for an increased focus in this era, beyond that shown by Streit, on making the UN system work better and on strengthening its own structures. The West, even if fully united, would need all the help it could get from the UN in managing and mediating the long transition period before global order might have a prospect of becoming truly universal and consistent.

9. The “nucleus” synthesis of hard and soft power

Here the basic points are obvious and have been validated empirically in practice. In the future, it can be expected that steps toward Union will continue to have a powerful multiplier effect on both hard and soft power, but minus one of the core factors -- the attractive pull of this-era membership hopes -- when applied to the emerging and future issues and conflicts with and in the Islamic and Third worlds.

a. Hard power. It was argued that the nucleus Union would multiply hard power, by uniting the powers of its member countries -- which were preselected to hold, collectively, a preponderance of geopolitical power in the world -- and directing them consistently along a common line, so that they would always reinforce and never again undercut one another. There was no renunciation of power here, but a union of powers into a common power wielded by a common government. National power was not to be eliminated but sublimated into a common power, losing its exclusivity and its connection to nationalism but on terms and with partners that would ensure that it would uphold the core national values and interests.

This union of powers into a “thick” common governmental structure would make for a qualitatively higher level of mutual reliability. This in turn would make it possible to plan consistently for the member countries so that they could work together for long-term and complex plans, rather than give up on difficult long-term plans -- as usually happened in merely inter-governmental arrangements for cooperation -- out of the expectation that one or another country would defect.

Meanwhile a common market of the uniting countries would serve to increase their prosperity. A common currency would further increase their economic power: uniting the main financial powerhouses of the world, it would be stable and unassailable, unlike the separate currencies some of which would always be weak vis-a-vis some of the others, or susceptible to defaulting on convertibility to gold as they did after 1929, an action that had exacerbated severely the economic downturn into a great and global depression.

b. Soft power. Here, too, the “nucleus Union” was to have a multiplier effect. (i) In legitimacy: the legitimacy of the power of the leading countries would be reinforced by the fact of their Union, by the conviction with which they could present themselves as the core of world order, and by the hope they would give the world. The consistency of their common policy would add further to legitimacy; so would their mutual support rather than the previous ideological as well as practical undercutting. Also, they would cease the practice of seeking out clients against one another in the rest of the world. (ii) In attractive pull: the Western powers always had an attractive pull, as the leading modernizing countries in the world and the bearers of freedom. This would be reinforced by Union, first of all by the increase it would make for in their hard power -- the increase in their prosperity, financial capabilities, and economic stability, and the increase in their ability to offer security and consistent economic and foreign policy support to client regimes. The very fact of replacing separate weights with a visible collective weight would multiply their influence: their collective weight would be enormous, in fact globally hegemonic

in all spheres, giving them an enormous gravitational pull; and they would no longer be pulling in separate directions that sometimes cancel one another out. Economic success would also add to their ideological attractiveness, in contrast to failures which had given an impression of legitimacy to the Communist and fascist rebellions against the liberal order in the Depression years.

“Soft” attractiveness would be increased above all by one more, highly unconventional feature: the very fact of being a new Union, thus potentially open to more members, and further understanding itself as “nucleus”, making that potential a matter of intention. The “nucleus union” would provide a visible and explicit opportunity to join, upon meeting its declared criteria -- primarily its baseline democratic standards. This would provide an enormous incentive to adapt to those standards and to proceed to join. What could compare to the economic opportunity of joining a common market with the core power of the global economy, or to the security opportunity of joining the common defense structure and guarantees of the core power of the global security system? This would astronomically exceed the benefits of intergovernmental cooperation, and so astronomically multiply the attraction. Instead of alienating other powers, as an exclusive national or regional organization would do, it would draw them in. And absorption is the ultimate form of influence, providing an inside say when not shared control over all future policies.

The reality has been perhaps not astronomical, but none the less impressive. The nucleus idea was implemented in less-than-federal institutions which nevertheless were integrative and more than merely intergovernmental. At first sign NATO provides a traditional intergovernmental security guarantee, but at second sight it has organized common defense measures so as to make its guarantees stick and reassure its members of the strict reliability of those guarantees. The EU goes farther beyond intergovernmentalism toward a Union of its peoples and governments, even if it still falls considerably short of a full federation. The attractiveness of both has proven enormous in each of the respects outlined above.

For nearly half a century, neutralists, pacifists, Greens, and leftists had argued that the EC and NATO were Cold War institutions that perpetuated the division of Europe, alienated the outsiders, and forced the Eastern Europeans into a closer Soviet embrace through the Warsaw Pact and COMECON. But the Soviets themselves began evaluating the EC positively already in the 1970s as an “objective” development based on interdependence, and more reluctantly, began evaluating NATO positively in 1989 in similar terms, recognizing that it would have to be one of the cornerstones of any genuine Common European Home. When Communism came to an end in Europe, all the successor states -- including Russia itself -- sought to get into the EC and NATO. The Euro-Atlanticist approach was, from a social science standpoint, completely vindicated; the neutralist criticism completely confuted.

Fate of the Nucleus synthesis after its 1989-91 vindication

Ironically, the West was taken aback by the rush of prospective members. It had in the interim mostly forgotten the nucleus idea; leftist criticism had prevailed in its public debate for some decades, particularly in academia, much of which lacked the memory of the terms of the debate so as to be able to register the actual results when they came in after 1989. Atlanticism in its

original transformative-nucleus form had faded from public visibility since the 1960s in favor of a neutral New Leftism as the cutting edge of transformative international politics and search for human survival and freedom. What remained of Atlanticism was a status quo form, rooted in the established officialdom and day-to-day needs of Atlantic institutions, understanding itself in the truncated terms of a defensive holding operation for the Cold War, with the result that the main thought in NATO in the last years of Gorbachev and even the first years of Yeltsin was a fear that it would dissolve in the absence of an enemy – a thought too often carried to the extreme, during the Gorbachev years, of denying that any real change was going on and dismissing it all as a “plot to divide and deceive the West” -- rather than a hope of realizing new vistas in the face of its victory.

It took some years for the Atlantic institutions to adapt to their own victory and to a spirit of renewed hope; and the process is far from complete. The doctrine of the nucleus was not formally revived, or even widely recovered intellectually. The debate over inclusion or exclusion of Russia proceeded in an unsatisfactory form, with more mere expression of prejudice against Russia -- rooted to be sure in a theoretical assumption, namely that NATO is really defined as the enemy of Russia, despite its diplomatic denials of enmity since 1990, and would lose its *raison d'être* if Russia were to join -- than deliberation on problems and possibilities. There remained a dismal lack of awareness of the underlying historical development of the Atlantic Alliance before there ever was a Cold War, and its absorption of all its previous enemy-pairs – not just France and Germany, but Britain and France before that, America and Britain before that – from one generation to the next.

Nevertheless, step by step, the nucleus approach has been revived in practice. NATO has expanded to include all the reasonably well-consolidated democracies in the former Soviet bloc area. It has deepened its limited relations with Russia since a real-life new enemy forced itself into consciousness on September 11, 2001. And it has declared the entire OSCE area eligible for membership upon meeting the standards, even if many doubts remain about the sincerity of its intention when it comes to Russia. It remains an open question whether in the end it will do more to integrate or to re-alienate Russia. Upon that question hinges, as a practical matter, a large part of the answer to whether the Atlantic “nucleus” will encompass a comfortable global hegemony of power. With Russia’s vast nuclear and WMD arsenals and its underutilized reservoir of technologists, its more complete integration with the Atlantic grouping remains essential if there is to be much prospect for the curtailment of nuclear proliferation, and for proceeding with a clean-up of the proliferating that the two superpowers and their allies had fostered during the long Cold War, when they were competing for clients among the nationalists of the Third World.

The EU has done somewhat better in managing its more limited nucleus-promises. Immediately upon the collapse of Eastern European Communism in 1989, it began a new round of its widening-deepening debate. This led in the 1990s to a series of treaties, deepening the European Community into a Union with wider competences and more efficient procedures. Ten Eastern European countries were admitted in 2004, after the Nice Treaty came into effect further streamlining voting. This was considered not quite adequate for managing the membership increase; an EU Constitution was drafted to make it adequate. However, the Constitution was defeated by referenda in France and the Netherlands. The decisive factor in the negative vote, far

exceeding the actual anti-EU minority constituency that is always present, was provided by fear that approval of the Constitution would be taken by elites as a green light for proceeding with membership for still more countries in the Balkans, and then Turkey. Inclusion of Turkey had not been a part of the original idea of British Federal Union or of the European Federalist movement, but historical facts of the Cold War had put it on the table already in the 1960s, and relentless American pressures -- which increased as the years went on and America became less sympathetic to the EU it has done so much to midwife if not father -- led to the EU's agreeing to set the processes for Turkish accession in motion in 2004-5. This backfired, leading to the defeat of the Constitution which was one of the conditions for Turkish membership as well as for adequately managing the host of smaller Eastern European new memberships.

This underlines the limits in expansion of "nuclei" unions, the boomerang effects when elites give an appearance of negligence of dangers of societal destabilization. At the same time it confirms the relevance of the thinking of the 1939 period on regional and nucleus unions.

European Federalists always had a primarily regional definition of the criteria for being in a European Union, with a full range of socioeconomic variables alongside the political variable of democracy. This defined the limits of Union, which were transgressed in the Turkish case due to Cold War accidents⁵, including the incorporation of Turkey into the Atlantic system beginning with the Truman Doctrine and Marshall Plan which fed into the OEEC and OECD. It never understood itself as a nucleus for more than a defined regional universe of potential members.

Atlantic integration, by contrast, had a more complex conception of itself as a nucleus. There was a duality in Streit's own work: he emphasized a universal democratic criterion for membership, but he also used a regional or sociological criterion for defining the initial group of members. His mixing of the two was fruitful, but also a source of confusion.

It surely made sense to unite the initial grouping, Streit pointed out, because they were united not only by their democracy but by a whole host of other social, economic, and historical factors, so that they could safely view their primary interests as being held in common not against one another. In other words, they constituted a sort of vast intercontinental region. But in this case, would it really make sense to admit other countries on a basis solely of a criterion of democracy, without regard to whether they fit the other original region's characteristics of society and interest? This was a leap in his logic.

To be sure, it was a leap that could be softened by his emphasis on "mature, experienced democracy" as the criterion; "maturity" is something that can potentially be defined as including sociological characteristics of modern industrial society, which in fact many scholars view as a de facto prerequisite for having a good quality, stable modern democracy. Evidence has been accumulated and quantified showing a strong correlation between the wealth of a democracy on the one side and its quality and stability on the other. However, the rhetoric of Streit's work went in the opposite direction: to exclude the sociological in favor of the ideological criterion. This made possible his slide from the proof of the viability of the initial union to his argument for

⁵ "Accident" is defined here as intersection with a separate causal chain lacking organic relation to or shared roots with the central causal chain at issue. For definition of accident and a discussion of its role in history, see Sidney Hook, *The Hero in History*, 1943.

hoping for an easy passage thereafter to universality. The actual passage has been in principle easy -- and mostly accomplished in the decades since -- for the non-democracies of his time within the industrialized sector of the world, but it looks much longer and harder for the remaining majority of the world's people.

Recognizing this, some of Streit's followers spun off in 1978-80 to form a parallel movement for new intermediate groupings between the Atlantic and global ones: a community of the Atlantic-Pacific or Trilateral democracies ("community" used in the sense of a supranational organization akin to the European Community), and an intergovernmental association of all democracies -- the latter serving as a circle that would lend greater universal relevance to the group's core Atlantic and Trilateral goals. The group called itself the Committees (now Council) for a Community of Democracies (CCD)⁶. This had a paradoxical outcome: the term "Community of Democracies" came to be applied to the outer intergovernmental association of all democracies that was actually formed in the 1990s instead of the inner integrative Trilateral grouping that it was intended for.⁷ It was a matter of adding more circles -- the Trilateral community surrounding the Atlantic alliance, the quasi-global association surrounding the Trilateral community -- to the Streitian universal of concentric circles. These additional circles are helpful in managing the transition to universality but cannot substantially foreshorten it; the fundamental equations remain unchanged. The passage to universality will be long and difficult, the schedule depending primarily on socioeconomic change; it can be mediated -- made less chaotic and slightly easier -- not bypassed by maximal use of international institutions; the only thing that could shorten it greatly would be a technological miracle.

The nucleus is a powerful synthesis, but not a perfect or final synthesis of regionalism and universalism, as Streit's writings led many to hope. As a strategy for getting from here to there, the nucleus idea has several interrelated but distinguishable components: as a nucleus of world order, a nucleus for concentric circles broadening out into the global institutions, a nucleus for adhesion of the rest of the industrialized world, a nucleus for eventual adhesion of everyone. The distinctions, once made, can clarify its limitations and potentialities.

As a "nucleus for adhesion", it has proved highly relevant to the globe-encircling region of the "North", but not so readily to the rest of the world. The 1939 illusion of a "Northwest Ordinance" was made possible by the existence of the European empires; the end of those empires meant the end of that illusion. The "nucleus of adhesion" aspect remained imminently relevant to Soviet bloc or Second World, but not to Third World, except perhaps in the very long term. Nevertheless the "nucleus of world order" aspect remains relevant to the entire world, as

⁶ CCD's founder was James R. Huntley, a retired USIA officer, former President of the Atlantic Council of the U.S., a founder of the Atlantic Institute, and a participant in the Federal Union organization since the 1950s. His book, *Uniting the Democracies: Institutions of the Emerging Atlantic-Pacific System* (NY, NYU Press, 1980), expounded Atlanticist and Trilateralist thinking from a vantage point of the history, structure and interrelations of the institutions; its final chapter, "Toward a Community of the Developed Democracies", was in effect the original manifesto of CCD.

⁷ Such a slippage in usage was a familiar phenomenon. Lionel Curtis is credited with having coined the term "Commonwealth of Nations" for the sequel to the British Empire; but he intended it literally, meaning a common polity or federation, as could be seen in the contents and the original title of his magnum opus, "The Project of a Commonwealth of Nations". It came instead to be applied to the consultative association and regular intergovernmental summit conferences that survived as a residue after the dissolution of the empire.

does the “nucleus of concentric circles”. Indeed, the countries of the South are in fact more sympathetic to Western/Northern unity than they had been during the Cold War, when they saw it as only one faction in the intra-North conflict that risked blowing up the world. Likewise, the UN began accepting NATO as a “regional” institution in the 1990s; during the Cold War, it had had no relation to NATO and treated it -- mistakenly -- as a systemic and moral equivalent of the Warsaw Pact. The concentric guiding role of the Atlantic system in global institutions has been reinforced by the UN’s gradually increasing willingness to turn to NATO for enforcement of global peacekeeping and peacemaking mandates. On its side, NATO as early as 1990 resolved that the end of the Cold War should lead to an upgrading of the UN. The Community of Democracies, as an intermediate circle or wheel or gear between the core system of Atlantic democracies and the global UN system, may come to help with the transmission between the two in the political arena, much as the Bretton Woods institutions have long provided gears to mediate the transmission from the Atlantic system to the universal system and back in the economic arena.

The current struggle against global terrorism and WMD proliferation mandates deeper unity among the industrial democracies and the integration of all other industrialized nations of the world into Atlantic camp, along with deepened cooperation across the other concentric circles. However, the Atlantic is unlikely to serve as a nucleus for proximate absorption of many of the Islamic countries even if they all were to enter a stable, democratic, and clean-of-terrorism phase. Oil rich and population small countries might have a chance to join the Atlantic nucleus in this era if they became stable democracies, but the Egypt and Bangladeshes and Pakistans would not, nor even the Indonesias and Irans. The Atlantic nucleus cannot promise them the rapid integration that it had promised to its former enemies in the “North” during the world wars and cold war. To be sure, the Bulgarian Atlantic Club -- one of the few Atlantic groups in recent where the original spirit of Atlanticism has been revived in a fairly conscious way -- proposes bringing Iraq into the Partnership for Peace (PFP). This would mean using PFP to form a new concentric circle going beyond to OSCE world -- the area of the Cold War -- and extending into the areas liberated during the war on terrorism. But that is probably not too far from the limit of what can be hoped for, at least in the near and medium term.

The nucleus in all its aspects thus remains highly relevant to the problems of the present and future, but it cannot promise as comprehensive a resolution to the problems as it promised -- and in the end for the most part provided -- to the problems of Germany, Japan, and Russia in the last century. Further: it cannot in itself resolve the First World-Third World gap. However, the sometimes polemical use of this fact is based on an optical illusion: in reality there is no good institutional solution for this problem, no matter whether the institutions are global, regional, or “nucleus”, and it would not be rational to tax the Atlantic grouping specially for not being in-itself a complete solution to it. One need only refer back to the maximal World Federalist proposal in this era -- triadic voting, in which First World and Third World would each retain a collective veto -- to see that no one is seriously proposing an institutional solution to the problem of achieving universality. It is best to address these matters with some scholarly consistency, without rhetorical disguises about who is proposing what, and without grandstanding or blame games about the unfairness of disproportions that are embedded in reality and whose major roots lie not in exploitation but in several centuries of innovative and self-regulative achievements of the Atlantic world. The disproportion will be overcome, if at all, only by further technological

and socioeconomic development, which institutions can help mediate but whose gaps institutions must meanwhile respect in their own structuring and balances. Atlanticism remains the key strategy for progress in getting from a world of nation states to a universal civilization. It is not the complete strategy; it is paradoxically less complete today than it was in the Cold War era despite its greater proven success, and is in need of even more supplements now than then. But it remains a component of enormous, central, and probably overriding importance.