How the West Was One: Representational Politics of NATO

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Contemporary discussions about the West having "won' the Cold War are framed within a conventional strategic discourse in which one political-military alliance, NATO, demonstrated its staying power and integrity in the face of its rival alliance, the Warsaw Pact. NATO's strategic practices, long the object of criticism on the part of revisionist historians and critical peace researchers, have apparently been vindicated.

This paper draws upon a variety of post-realist approaches to global politics to examine NATO as a set of practices by which the West has constituted itself as a political and cultural identity. By turning our attention from the external, foreign, and defense policies of NATO and its member states to the domestic social and cultural dimensions of Western security politics, we can illuminate a side of security policy overlooked in conventional debates. NATO's success resides in having provided a network of intertextual representations for the articulation of global political space. Traditional security concerns, including the nature of the Soviet/Warsaw Pact "threat," can thereby be seen not as existing externally out there on their own, but as circulating within a broader set of social practices. In the wake of recent developments within the Warsaw Pact and between the two alliance systems, the critical perspective outlined here enables us to analyze contemporary security issues in ways that transcend prevailing strategic discourse. Theoretically, we can see the outlines of a post-realist approach to security. For Europe, such an approach accords dignity to alternative, post-statist, post-modern security arrangements.

Conventional Accounts

Western strategists can be proud of having "won" the Cold War. The editorial columns of newspapers and the pages of many journals are crammed these days with words of heady self-confidence proclaiming the demonstrable superiority of the First World to the Second. The great ideological battles of history are now apparently over. Communism, once so virile, lies tattered and beaten, whether in the streets of Prague or in the ballot boxes of East Germany and Hungary. With the waning of the East-West military standoff across the German-German border and the gradual incorporation of a divided Europe into something like a regional community, the historic need for NATO and the Warsaw Pact will alter dramatically.

Already, the Pact has all but disintegrated. NATO, by contrast, will not fade away so quickly—nor, in the conventional account, should it. Forty years of peace, what John Lewis Gaddis (1987) has called "the long peace," now appear to be giving way to a new era of security politics. NATO's future is yet to be determined, though likely it will involve a graduated reduction of its traditional military presence and an enlarged role as the political coordinator for an expanded European community.

Conventional accounts of NATO, established upon the analytic base offered by realism and strategic studies, focus upon the ability of the member states to coordinate their national policies and to meet the challenge offered by the Warsaw Pact (Langer, 1986; Flanagan, 1988). NATO has overseen an era of prosperity and security unprecedented in European history. Considering the depth and intensity of continental rivalries dating back centuries, the postwar era of NATO policy coordination must accordingly stand as a most impressive diplomatic-military achievement (Schmidt, 1969; Schwartz, 1983; DePorte, 1986). However much NATO divests itself of certain military-technical functions, there is no reason to believe it should rid itself entirely of a guiding role in the future of European security. Not even the renewed attention accorded the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe justifies doing away with NATO as the organization principally responsible for shepherding European security into the next century.

Memoirs, monographs, and textbooks all testify to the magnitude of transnational negotiations that led to the Alliance's creation in 1949. The basic story, with some variation, is that a war-torn and war-exhausted Western Europe could not, on its own resources, mobilize a successful response to the challenge posed by postwar Communism, a challenge posed in the dual form of political subversion and Stalin's armed forces. Accounts vary, reflecting the immediate postwar debate about whether the primary threat was posed by the Red Army on the Eastern bank of the Elbe River or by the domestic social and economic weakness of the West. The first years of the postwar era were characterized by this disagreement. Dean Acheson, for instance, writing in 1948, argued that the Soviet Union could well be within reach of "the greatest prize in history without military effort on its part—a power-system stretching from the Atlantic to the Pacific and comprising most of the industry and resources of the world" (Acheson, 1949:4).

Perhaps it is not so surprising that subsequent accounts of NATO's formation downplay the seriousness of this founding debate and describe the postwar era retrodictively, as if the military threat emanating from the East had been unambiguous (L. S. Kaplan, 1988). Early debate raged, however, between the U.S. State Department's Policy Planning Staff and the War Department as to the degree of military threat (Etzold and Gaddis, 1978; Nathanson, 1988). George F. Kennan, after all, ultimately left the State Department in frustration when it became clear to him that his 1947 "X" article was being read literally and that the armed services were exploiting claims about Soviet military might to the detriment of any political-diplomatic solution to the German question. Kennan consistently opposed the militarization of European relations and argued passionately—if fruitlessly—against the sweeping geographic and ideological scope accorded the proposed North Atlantic Alliance (Kennan, 1967).

A number of analysts have subsequently confirmed that then-contemporary claims about Soviet military capacities lacked empirical validity. The very process of making intelligence estimates about the Soviet strategic threat has been fraught with institutional and interpretive difficulties that reduced accounts of Soviet power to a thoroughly politicized guessing game (Freedman, 1986). In the absence of satellite surveillance or electronic eavesdropping capabilities in the immediate postwar period, the process of gaining accurate information was a precarious enterprise. Two subsequent assessments of what American analysts would have found had they had full

access to actual figures on troop deployments and weapons readiness at that time reveal levels of Soviet armaments that were woefully inadequate for offensive, Western-directed operations (Evangelist, 1982/83; Mueller, 1988).

The entire postwar era was characterized by estimates and claims about the nature of the Soviet threat that were scarcely sustained by the empirical evidence available even at the time. Critics of Western strategy often claim that the problem resides in strategic analysts having radically distinguished between Soviet "intentions" and Soviet "capabilities" (Booth, 1979:110–21). The critique claims that Western threat assessments have been made exclusively on the basis of material recountings of available weapons systems, regardless of the political purposes to which such weaponry might reasonably be put. But such a critique is nearly 180 degrees off the mark; strategic analysis recurrently privileged claims about intentions over actual operational capabilities. What continually carried the day in the absence of reliable intelligence estimates was a series of discursively constructed claims about the nature of the Soviet totalitarian state and about its implacable global purposes (Spiro and Barber, 1970). The most influential postwar document of all, NSC-68 (1950), contains not a single empirical claim about actual Soviet deployments. Subsequent invocations of "the bomber gap," "the missile gap," "the INF-gap," and "the window of vulnerability" derived their value as significations of imminent danger only by drawing upon salient claims, sometimes explicated but, often allowed to reside in a tacit subtext, about the alien-ness and "other-ness" of Soviet political culture (F. Kaplan, 1983; Sanders, 1983; Campbell, 1989). The ensuing sense of distance enabled analysts to make all sorts of claims about potential strategic moves. Even if the imputation was within the realm of possibility, let alone the question of plausibility, the mere reference to the question of "what would happen if . . .?" granted credibility to invocations of a threat. A whole generation of strategists reified such claims about intentions into an argument about the basic structure of international relations as a Hobbesian security dilemma (Herz, 1950; Buzan, 1987). With these various arguments, analyses of military policy could be sustained regardless of any empirical evidence indicating operationally feasible aggressive policies on the part of an adversary.

The important point here is not that the Soviet threat is or is not a mythic construct, but that the creation and perpetuation of NATO required a particular representation of Soviet strategy. The imaginative construction of the Soviet threat as a constitutive dimension of the Cold War cannot be chalked up to false consciousness or deliberate deception on the part of policy makers. Nor can a crudely materialistic accounting of ideology and interest mediation explain the linkages between the domestic armaments sectors and the nature of extended nuclear deterrence. The historical record of strategic debates reveals that nuclear deterrance strategy follows its own internal logic and that much of what passes for strategic modernization is an attempt not to meet the latest level of Soviet deployments but to resolve contradictions and dilemmas internal to Western strategy. In this sense, when it comes to NATO, the external referent of the Soviet threat begins to pale in importance to the concerns expressed by strategists themselves regarding the need to construct certainty about life at home (Dalby, 1988).

A Genealogy of NATO

In a recent essay devoted to the symbolic character of nuclear politics, Robert Jervis argues that Western strategy in Europe after 1945 was not primarily interested in the instrumental purposes to which Soviet force might be applied. The concerns, rather, had more to do with allaying fears of vulnerability which attended the uncertainties of the postwar order. "Indeed, when NATO was formed, the American decision

makers were preoccupied not with the danger of Soviet invasion but with the need for and difficulties of European economic and political reconstruction." (Jervis, 1989:206). This suggests that strategic debates derive their power from their affinity with widely circulated representations of cultural and political life (Shapiro, 1989).

Western military strategy, despite its focus on weapons and technology, is no exception. It draws its capital from its ability to provide a sense of order and rationality to the world. Classical strategists like Hedley Bull (1977), Michael Howard (1984), Henry Kissinger (1954, 1965) and Hans Morgenthau (1976) have continually argued that alliances in general, and NATO in particular, must articulate a specific form of cultural life and preserve certain historical achievements. In this conservative tradition, the processes through which inter-state "order" and the "society" of states are established are inherently problematic. The conservatism consists in assuming that such "order" and "structure" are available and normatively worthy as pursuits and that they are not to be achieved through narrowly instrumental, weapons-technocratic approaches to security.

A genealogical account of alliance defense policy explores the practices by which certain boundaries of political space became demarcated across Central Europe. It explores, as well, the forms of identity which came to prevail over other possible forms that Western politics—and global security practices—could have assumed. Such an analysis does not result in a singular master narrative, but rather in an open, internally differentiated set of practices in which elements of power are always in the process of being contestated and rearticulated (Foucault, 1977; Der Derian, 1987; Ashley, 1987, 1988, 1989).

NATO as a political practice constructed a particular architecture of global space (Dillon, 1989). But that design was never according to a master plan, and it did not emanate from some sovereign source of power. NATO's success was due not to having deterred Soviet aggression, nor to having successfully managed repeated crises among its allies, but to having produced those various allies in the first place.

The account that follows is somewhat at odds with those critical studies of NATO and Western strategy that focus on armaments and the postwar world military order (Senghaas, 1972; Kaldor, 1978, 1981; Luckham, 1987). In examining the links between the domestic armaments base and international relations, these studies argue that NATO occupies a hegemonic place among world alliance systems and that its combined economic, military, and political resources have endowed it with the privilege to disseminate transnational infrastructures of rule throughout the postwar multilateral system of Western-oriented trade. Such a perspective on Western policy offers a more critical and globalist interpretation than traditionally realist, state-centered views that have enjoyed widespread circulation among more conventional political-military strategists (Gilpin, 1981; Kennedy, 1988). Yet both of these approaches, the one radical, the other more traditional, emphasize structural dimensions of global power and impose a greater order and logic on world politics than can be substantiated through a detailed examination' of how an actual alliance system functions.

Modernization

For Kennan, the primary threat to Western security lay not in Soviet military power but in the weakened fabric of Western life. To counter this weakness, he argued, the decisive policies should not be military encirclement but the rebuilding of Western infrastructures. Writing in 1948 in the context of debates about the European Recovery Plan, the ERP, Kennan argued:

> This is the significance of the ERP, the idea of European Union, and the cultivation of a closer association with the U.K. and Canada. For a truly stable world

order can proceed, within our lifetime, only from the older, mellower and more advanced nations of the world—nations for which the concept of order, as opposed to power, has value and meaning. If these nations do not have the strength to seize and hold real leadership in world affairs today, through that combination of political greatness and wise restraint which goes only with a ripe and settled civilization, then as Plato once remarked: ". . . cities will never have rest from their evils,—no nor the human race, as I believe." (Kennan, 1948:100)

Kennan's famous "Long Telegram" of 1946 (Kennan, 1946:63) concluded with the observation that "Much depends on health and vigor of our own society. World communism is like a malignant parasite which feeds only on diseased tissue." This medicalized representation was to find a more sustained account in the work of W. W. Rostow, the architect of modernization theory and a key figure in the articulation of modern Western identity. In Rostow's memorable words (1960:162, 1961:235), "Communism is a disease of the transition" from traditional to modern society. It would require Western military intervention in the form of anti-guerrilla insurgents to staunch the infection. To reconstruct the West, and to bring the rest of the world along with it, would require therapies of "modernization." These would prove crucial in the development of a recognizably Western world order, for "to modernize" would come to mean to improve, to upgrade, to make something better by technical refinement. In both economic development and military deterrence, themes of "modernization" were to animate public policy.

Economic modernization refers to the process of enforced changes, implemented from above by a secular state system, that strategically alter the social landscape and prepare the way for a capitalist, market-oriented political economy. The master plan for this reworking of international life was the self-consciously proclaimed handbook of Westernization, Rostow's *The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto* (1960). The book was crucial in setting the terms of the subsequent "development" paradigm (Gendzier, 1985:6). The basic idea was to absorb the newly independent, formerly colonial states into a global political economy. Rostow's stages of growth presented the clearest attempt to draw the post-colonial world into the Western orbit. His teleological unfolding of the various stages of development culminates in "the age of high mass consumption." As Rostow's words attest, the millennial deliverance of life that results is truly an inspiring achievement: "The second stage of growth embraces societies in the process of transition; that is, the period when the preconditions for take-off are developed; for this is the time to transform a traditional society in the ways necessary for it to exploit the fruits of modern science, to fend off diminishing returns, and thus to enjoy the blessings and choices opened up by the march of compound interest" (Rostow, 1960:6).

This paean to impending affluence is a useful example of how "modernization" draws its sustenance from particular representations of life. Implicit in this celebratory account of development is a series of conceptual commitments that need to be brought to the foreground if practitioners concerned with "developing" societies are to understand fully what analysts have in store for them. "Traditional" societies are seen as mired in a pre-Newtonian world, confined to natural horizons with a fixed "ceiling on the level of attainable output per head" (Rostow, 1960:4). Such a limiting cosmology has to be transformed for modernization to proceed. This "pre-modern" worldview is to be replaced by a recognizably "modern" one of unlimited growth. Nature thereby becomes a resource for use by human beings who now stand at the center of all things.

A network of representations is called into play here: mutually dependent conceptions of nature, man, goods, and society. A set of dichotomies is invoked, with the "pre-Newtonian" world on one side and "modern" affluent cultures on the other:

traditional society/modern society, nature/science, subsistence/wealth. Only by tac-
itly invoking these dichotomous representations and invoking one side continually
against the other is Rostow's discourse of development possible.

But the mediation of the transition processes required here is by no means politi-
cally neutral. It is strikingly violent. Rostow's developmental discourse draws upon a
key assumption that modern, Western developed societies are simply better and
more desirable than traditional, pre-modern societies. Ever the economist, he calls
this "the demonstration effect" of modern technology and lifestyles. The world's
people really want Western products. But just in case they don't—and here Rostow's
text gets murky—they can always look over the shoulder of traveling salesmen and
see battleship guns in the harbor. Surely, this is an impressive sight, one that demon-
strates the (potentially) superior effects of modern Western society. Spurred on by
these "demonstration effects" of Western goods, the peoples of the formerly colonial
world are induced to follow along and to develop themselves in the footsteps of their
uninvited guests.

When problems develop in the modernization process, the state steps in to expe-
dite change. Rostow, writing in the heady days of development, was characteristically
sanguine about this process, seeing as the only obstacle the unfortunate tampering
by Communist elements—whom, he argued, could be dealt with through covert
action and counter-insurgency warfare. When more profound social problems
threatened the developmental process, more sophisticated forms of military and
paramilitary involvement would be needed. Samuel P. Huntington, with a keener
eye than Rostow towards the political difficulties of modernization and thus more
attuned to the prerequisites of institution building, delivered the theoretical justifica-
tion for the constructive, socially transformative role of Third World military elites
in his *Political Order and Changing Societies* (1968). Looking favorably upon the contri-
bution to modernization of such reformers as Ataturk, Nasser, and Sukarno, Hun-
tington argued that in elite-bound, traditional societies, the military represents a new
and liberating political force that can break the hold of reactionary forces and loosen
their hold upon the economy and culture. In other words, the domestic military had
to be cultivated as part of the state building process, in the name of enforced mod-
ernization from above. To prepare local elites for this task, a whole series of mea-
sures would be needed, ranging from police training, the sale of arms designed for
local use against domestic sources of turbulence, and the defeat of revolutionary
labor movements in the name of creating favorable climates for international invest-
ment and wage assembly work (Packenham, 1973; Augelli and Murphy, 1988; Klein
and Unger, 1989).

This, too, was the stuff of modernization. It was always part of postwar U.S.
strategy, and it represents the dark underside of the developmental process. As a
discourse of reconstruction, developmental modernization provided an architecture
for the physical and social reshaping of the global landscape. In Europe this was
conducted under the umbrella of the Marshall Plan. Globally, the impetus for this
reorientation of life was provided by the World Bank, Truman's Point Four Pro-
gram, Kennedy's Peace Corps, and a panoply of political-economic-military alliance
projects that linked domestic state building with transnational integration under the
U.S. aegis (Barnet, 1972; Fagen, 1979). In the absence of any identifiable external
threats to such areas as Latin America or the Southwest Pacific, for instance, the only
plausible argument for the creation of the Rio Pact in 1947 or ANZUS was to use a
military security bond as the cutting edge for state/society building along modern,
Western lines. In Europe, however, the invocation of an external security threat
enjoyed a modicum of plausibility merely through the existence of Soviet "other-
ness." Continental unity had been shattered, after all. Central Europe disappeared in
the spring of 1945. Throughout the postwar era, there were only East and West. The

task of defining the boundaries and limits of Western identity was made considerably easier with the creation on the other side of the Iron Curtain of an adversary whose culture and world view offered, it was argued, a reverse image of everything celebrated by the emergent allies.

Deterrence

In the immediate postwar era, deterrence was developed and institutionalized by strategic/security studies. The initial effort was strikingly Americo-centric (Hoffman, 1977; F. Kaplan, 1983; Klein, 1988). Within a decade the logic of deterrence came to be accepted in Western Europe as a convenient means for linking the fate of the developed industrial powers under U.S. sponsorship.

Strategic think tanks first developed in the United States immediately after World War II in order to coordinate the newfound power of nuclear bombs. The prime sponsor of this effort was the Air Force, which maintained until the mid-1950s a monopoly of the means to deliver the weapon. A crucial discursive shift from "defense" to "security" enabled a whole profession to emerge as a subdiscipline of international relations and to rationalize the possession of weapons—not to win a war, as with past armed forces, but to prevent a war from ever again rising. This was the charge issued by Bernard Brodie (1946) in his classic work, *The Absolute Weapon*.

The academic subdiscipline of strategic studies become a decisive force in trans-Atlantic politics around the mid- to late-1950s. Crucial to the emergence of a unifying approach to strategy was the export of the field from the United States to Western Europe. Here it is impossible to overstate the importance of the London-based Institute for Strategic Studies, founded in 1958 and renamed in 1963 as the International Institute for Strategic Studies. The IISS became a site for the articulation of a Western strategic consensus, not necessarily in terms of complete agreement, but in terms of the language and policy problems that came widely to be shared among responsible managers of alliance affairs (Skaggs, 1987; Howard, 1989). Throughout the first half of the 1950's there had been anything but agreement on trans-Atlantic defense strategy. The 1952 Lisbon Accords calling for a NATO troop strength of 90 divisions immediately proved unworkable because of the economic and demographic toll that would have been entailed. Economic reconstruction and the need to draw upon a working-age labor force dictated that none of the West European powers would accede to such demands on its populace. When President Eisenhower's fiscal conservatism suggested nuclear guarantees of Massive Retaliation for Europe, John Foster Dulles immediately came under criticism for having articulated an inflexible non-strategy that lacked credibility in the face of conventional Soviet probes westward (Kaufmann, 1956; Nitze, 1956; Kissinger, 1957; Taylor, 1960; Schmidt, 1961). Such criticisms were heightened a short time later when the Soviets developed a thermonuclear capacity that could be delivered upon Western Europe (though not yet upon the U.S.A).

The difficulty of constructing allies was perhaps no more evident than with France's ambiguously independent place in world affairs (Johnstone, 1984:81–135). Throughout the complex negotiations over the status of Berlin and Germany, France had made clear its reluctance to accept anything but a divided status for its historic rival. Cold War accounts focusing exclusively upon the Soviet Union's bargaining position vis à vis the United States overlook the importance of France's strategy to contain not only Soviet power but potential German power as well (Gaddis, 1972, 1982). Nothing would have been more disastrous for France's revived postwar economy than a repetition of the rivalry that had previously wracked its relations with Germany, especially over the Saarland and Rhineland. A peculiarly French quasi-imperial role was also evident in Paris' reluctance to liquidate its world-

wide colonial holdings. Protracted post-colonial wars, first in Indochina then in Algeria, were the immediate results of France's stubbornly traditional aspirations throughout the nuclear era. Even today, France retains remarkable independence as a renegade power, free from various test ban treaties and arms control policies. It enjoys complete freedom in patrolling Francophone Northwest Africa and New Caledonia and freely utilizes its holdings in French Polynesia for nuclear testing, despite significant regional opposition.

Possession of an independent nuclear force enabled France to persist in its imperial pretense. Gaullism benefited greatly from the symbolic independence afforded by the strategy of "deterrence in all directions:" targeted westward, in other words, at the unreliable Americans, as well as eastward at the Soviet Union. The peculiarity of French nuclear independence has been that the most likely target for the "force de frappe" was neither of the superpowers but West Germany, whose easternmost border was until recently the farthest that French land-based weapons could reach from their base on the Albion Plain. In the past few years, France has selectively extended its "sanctuary" to include southern Germany. But France's basic policy of enjoying an independent global strategy has been accompanied by a nuclear force that, even with submarine-based missiles, has never threatened more than minimal retaliation. Such a minimal strategy has been France's way of signalling its distrust of complex formulae for extended deterrence, flexible response, and ladders of escalation.

France's suspicions of NATO strategy are well founded. Leon Sigal (1984:164) has concisely captured the infeasible operational source of NATO's nuclear options. As he recently wrote, "The dilemmas of nuclear location, relocation, and dual capability suggest that if, as the saying goes, armies are designed by geniuses to be run by idiots, the reverse is true for short-range nuclear forces in Europe."

Sigal's claim holds true for the history of NATO strategy. Small wonder the Alliance finds itself enmeshed in repeated crises of policy coordination (McNamara, 1962; Schwartz, 1983). No NATO strategy calling for use of any level of nuclear forces has shown any operational promise. The much-heralded formula of flexible response as enshrined in NATO planning document MC14/3 and the Harmel Report of 1967 (*NATO*, 1981:98–100) was nothing more than a successful papering over of the divergent geostrategic interests of each of the NATO members. Flexible response was an agreement to disagree (Ball, 1982/83). It was a political compromise, largely initiated by Europeans trying to bind reluctant Americans to come to their nuclear defense. The paradox of such a strategy is that it threatens Continental, indeed global, destruction to fend off the possibility of a local attack. This then raises thorny issues. The U.S. rightly fears being brought into the fray too early and argues for a more robust conventional deterrent. The European allies are unwilling to expend funds for full conventionalization, but are also afraid that American nuclear guarantees might be confined to a Continental war while preserving the major powers as sanctuaries.

These have been intractable dilemmas, but it is mistaken to see them as merely military-technical in nature—or, for that matter, as evidence of NATO's impending demise. For the North Atlantic Alliance has derived its strength not from the plausibility of its externally directed deterrence posture but rather from the content of the distinctly modern forms of political identity which it has championed (Klein, 1989). Indeed, public opinion polls document a suspicion towards any weapons-technical strategy and a manifest rejection of every particular force structure as unworkable and unacceptable. But such a suspicion towards rearmament should not be mistaken for a repudiation of what those strategies are primarily about.

Here it seems that popular opinion is considerably more sophisticated than much professional analysis. As polls over the last decade have repeatedly shown, public

opinion, while rejecting particular deployments, overwhelmingly endorses the political purposes of the Alliance and supports NATO as a necessary means for the preservation of certain Western values (Flynn and Rattinger, 1985; Domke, Eichenberg, and Kelleher, 1987; Rochon, 1988; Eichenberg, 1989). It seems that NATO is more widely appreciated in a political role than in a military one. Such a reading undercuts those from the peace research community who would exploit discontent about weapons systems but who themselves lack a political critique of NATO.

At stake with NATO was not merely military security but also the consolidation of domestic consensus over dissident parties, labor movements, peace groups, and all those marginal or liminal groups whose aspirations could not find expression in the postwar order. The genius of NATO as a security alliance was the way in which its particularly modern accounts of development and security were enframed within a widely legitimate strategic discourse of deterrence. By effectively wedding itself to the defense of a distinctly modern, Western, Atlantico-centric cultural project, strategic discourse deflected criticism of the Alliance's otherwise obvious contradictions. The only defense of deterrence was that it worked to fend off a major international war. Until proven wrong by the outbreak of such a war, NATO's strategy was thus the only feasible means of securing that precarious historical construct called "the Western way of life."

Instrumental arguments on behalf of deterrence effectively depoliticized nuclear arrangements by reducing them to a rational-technical problem of policy adjustment. The irony is that in order to strengthen the hand of deterrence, strategists had to acknowledge the apparent irrationality and absurdity of a security system which cultivated a version of peace through structural intimidation and the threat of mutual annihilation.

Re-Presenting NATO

The strategic/security enterprise is engaged in a politics of representation which helps constitute and delimit the identities of various peoples (Shapiro, 1988). Strategic studies celebrates the processes of modernity by reifying cultural construction into a completed historical act, enshrined as Western culture. But it is possible to acknowledge or recognize alternative ways of life within that Western space (Clifford and Marcus, 1986; Clifford, 1988). The exercise is a reminder of what, ethnographically speaking, the strategic equation excludes. For the ultimate question forestalled by modern Western strategy has been the one who or what "we" in "the West" are. In other words, the politics of strategy has to do with selecting this or that particular account of human life as dominant. Numerous forms of life are ruled out of the picture as inconsistent with the cultural claims of a singular, modern, progressive industrial order. There are many candidates for that liminal space which escapes Western "identity": Gypsies in Great Britain, those "Traveler" peoples whose caravans represent the last vestiges of freeholders dispossessed by enclosure movements; Balkan guest workers in West German cities, who are not eligible for service in the Bundeswehr but who occupy the kind of marginal work stations now deemed unacceptable by modern Europeans; Lapp reindeer herders, whose presence in the upper reaches of Scandinavia hardly seems a contribution to NATO's Northern Flank; Native Indians in the Canadian Northwest, who now share space with the surveillance installations of NORAD; and the former colonial peoples of the British Empire now seeking refuge in the core. A whole series of marginal categorizations and boundaries could be enumerated, and they need not be limited to the ethnographic. Fractures of class, gender, and race—of partisan politics and religious identity—all demark potential sites of contestation within the Western Alliance. Yet these are unacknowledged, except as internal threats to the unit and "identity" of the West.

NATO's representations of modern geopolitical space presuppose an unproblematic singular human identity which all members of the West either embody or aspire towards. This is, after all, what is worth dying for or, in the modern age of deterrence, worth voting monies for in order to "secure." The classical strategic tradition has always enshrined this singular Western space as beyond politics. Those who would disturb it tamper with "order" and Western "stability."

This is why oppositional peace groups in the last decade or two have remained so ephemeral in the West (Herf, 1986). Their critiques of military-technical strategy underplay the broader parameters of the life secured by deterrence strategies and modern weapons systems (Walker, 1984). Thus Western strategists find a greater reserve of support through emphasizing these cultural dimensions of Western policy than through emphasizing the latest round of measures to ensure security against threats from the East. Besides, in the Gorbachev era the invocation of such threats will ring hollow.

In the absence of an overwhelmingly plausible sign of danger, there are grounds for exploiting certain political breaches that have recently opened up in NATO. Reading NATO documents and debates today leaves one with the unmistakable impression that the basic problem facing the alliance is the absence of a plausible threat to Western military security (Head, 1989). It turns out that Gorbachev poses the greatest challenge of all to NATO because he refuses to participate in the requisite duplication of the Cold War intertext (Joenniemi, 1989)—something that Stalin, Khrushchev, and Brezhnev were too unimaginative to contemplate. Even if Stalin's armies weren't large enough to roll over the West, NATO drew upon the existence of the Soviet's counter-offensive wartime strategy to justify its own existence (Holloway, 1984, 1988/89; Snyder, 1987/88).

Gorbachev's strategy seems to take the Western project at face value and to sign on the Soviet Union as partner in a truly hegemonic global order. This can be seen as the next stage in the evolution of Soviet communism, a system that has always been more productivist and modernist than either its apologists or severest critics have wanted to acknowledge. But it would be too simple-minded to see such a development as confirming, in the words of Francis Fukuyama (1989), "The End of History." Nothing takes care of itself, least of all the completion of modernity writ large. Dramatic recent developments in Eastern Europe and the USSR suggest that initiatives undertaken or set in motion by Gorbachev embody a somewhat more critical and transformative politics than that hailed by Western celebrants of enhanced international interdependence.

In effect, Gorbachev is challenging Western representations of modern political life at three levels. First of all, of course, recent Soviet policy calls into question the very idea of a Soviet threat, or at least of an implacable one which can be countered only by the reciprocal threat of overwhelming counterforce. Second, moves toward "transarmament" and structurally defensive military orientations provided a weapons-technical response to the problem of Continental security. Whether this tendency, already implicit in recent Soviet moves to thin out tank and artillery formations among Warsaw Pact forces, will materialize in full form is a question that remains to be answered. But this initiative, drawing upon recent European debates about non-offensive defense (*Bulletin*, 1988; Meyer, 1988), is, curiously enough, an instrumental response that meets long-heralded security needs on the very terms presented and championed within strategic analysis.

Recent developments in the democratic reorganization of East European countries open up possibilities that longstanding structures will slowly but irreversibly fade away. Gradual liberalization within certain Warsaw Pact countries is part of a broader loosening up of Soviet policy towards its eastern security glacis. The Brezhnev Doctrine is now obsolete. A remodernization of NATO defense arrange-

ments seems hardly compatible with either public opinion or the imperatives of increasingly budget-conscious defense officials. Within a relatively brief time, NATO debates about a variety of new, innovative high-tech strategies—the Rogers Plan, AirLand Battle, Follow-On Forces Attack, or even something as straightforward as modernization of Lance short-range systems—have been cast aside as politically unmarketable. In the breach that has opened up, the opportunity has arisen for a reconceptualization of security practices long thought vital to the integrity of the Western Alliance. One need not succumb to blandishments like "the greening of defense budgets" to see that the whole logic of military blocs is increasingly susceptible to questioning from a variety of critical attitudes. The dual effect of domestic liberalization within the East bloc and reduced militarization across the German-German border would present strategists from both sides new opportunities unimaginable a decade ago.

Third, and most important, the unraveling of Cold War representations raises for the first time the fundamental issue of Western identity. It is no longer clear who is to be legitimately incorporated within the space of modern Western culture. The imminent reconstitution of Central Europe as a functioning entity is but one version of a larger overturning of categories of political space and culture that were sacrosanct throughout the Cold War era. The divide between East and West was a divide between "us" and "them" (Williams, 1983). For Europeans this was a more violent and arbitrary interpretation of world politics than for North Americans. Today, the bifurcation works less well than ever. The contours of Western identity and values are no longer clearly drawn. In both East and West, modernist orientations toward humankind and nature are striving towards economic modernization through an expanded European community. Yet these cultures also claim a considerable share of orthodox, even fundamentalist, religiosity, including forms of nationalist essentialism that had been mistakenly thought more appropriate to the last century than to the next (Brzezinski, 1989/90; Hough 1989/90:36–40).

It would therefore be wrong to assume that a new politics of European security can be exaustively defined in terms of universal striving towards national democratic self determination. The political movements now poised to redefine the shape and nature of NATO and East-West relations are not readily assimilable within the conventional analytical categories of postwar strategic studies. The nationality strivings of the Soviet Baltic republics, for instance, offer the possibility of confederated state systems with all sorts of cooperation in economics and conventional military security.

Simultaneous with such state-directed efforts are the longstanding social movements of opposition that have influenced NATO politics for at least two decades. Labor organizations, student groups, feminist cooperatives, and ecological groups have all been involved in the development of practices which are, to varying degrees, at odds with the singular progressivist trajectory of Western industrial culture. Perhaps the most enduring legacy of the peace movement is its critiques of technology and technological discourse (Nelkin and Pollack, 1981). They effectively opened up a space within the logic of modernization that enabled social movements at odds with modernity to secure a legitimate, if still decidedly subordinate, place.

The articulation of post-modern, post-statist orientations towards political practice has occurred simultaneously with what can be referred to as the respatialization of the Third World: the realization that poverty, hopelessness, starvation, unequal development, and environmental exhaustion are not exclusively qualities of underdeveloped countries; they are endemic to modern, advanced industrial cities as well. The divide between First and Third World, itself a spatial representation of homogeneous geopolitical space, is effectively breaking down. Sweeping global generalizations, whether about "us" and "them" or about "core," "semi-periphery," and "periphery," are increasingly implausible. Who and what "we" are is not as clear-cut as

claimed by analysts wedded to traditions of realism and empiricism, or for that matter, to traditions of materialism (Magnusson and Walker, 1988; Walker, 1988b).

Whether he knows it or not, Gorbachev functions as a critical strategic theorist insofar as his actions destabilize and decenter long-heralded assumptions of international life. The self-evident legitimacy of NATO is only the most obvious issue now up for grabs. So, too, is the whole concept of security, along with the identity of those whose "security" was supposedly ensured by weapons-technical strategies of deterrence (Buzan, 1983; Walker, 1988a).

It remains to be seen whether a modernist impulse will be able to contain these new dimensions of culture and political identity. The integrationist vision of 1992 is still bounded by a narrow, secular, and ultimately Western vision of political identity. It may be more enlightened than the attempt to reimpose the twenty-five years of the American Century through the techno-strategic vision of *Discriminate Deterrence* (Commission, 1988). But neither of these perspectives is capable of acknowledging the ongoing politics of redefining cultural "order." Classical strategic thought has never dared to address this dimension of security policy, nor has critical peace research.

The world created under NATO's guidance is no longer subject to containment. Its boundaries have been eroded at the eastern-most margin. The result has been an unprecedented opening up of social and cultural politics. But this process is not confined to the member states of the Warsaw Pact. It has been going on all along in the West, despite NATO's efforts to formalize a unitary identity as part of its strategic project.

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