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Introduction:

‘The Post-1989 World: A Crisis of Western Identity’

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The concept of a politically unified Europe has been consistently advocated over the last two centuries; from Victor Hugo's *États Unis d'Europe* to Coudenhove-Kalergi's *Pan-Europe* and Briand's *Fédération Européenne*. It was not, however, until the economic plan to pool French and German coal and steel production of post Second World War Europe, that a European community was born. Vain attempts have since been made to politically integrate the European Communities member states. Europeans experienced greater difficulty in agreeing on a political and security community, such as the European Defense Community. In the end, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) primacy in guaranteeing European security was almost unanimously accepted. One of the reasons for this consensus was the presumed identity of interests of the 'Western world' (often defined as including Western Europe, the United States, and Canada) in the Cold War context.

However, with the end of the Cold War the 'Western identity' came into question. This 'Western identity' was based on a set of shared interests and a common cultural heritage that traveled from Europe, the Old World, to North America, the New World. The common enemy, which fueled this identity, had succumbed peacefully. Yet, 'Cold War triumphalism', present in many representative scholarly works on the Cold War and the fall of Communism in Eastern Europe, did not anticipate the effects of these historical events on what had become the 'Western identity'.

The authors of the articles included in this special issue examine this unexpected identity crisis. While their approach and analysis take various forms, Daria Kazarinova, Juan-Camilo Castillo and Rouba Al-Fattal all assert that the growing divide between the

European Union and the American models of security and foreign affairs has contributed to this crisis. The events of 1989 came during the European scramble for a common identity. In a way, the end of the Cold War also brought to an end one of the key characteristics of the European identity that the EU had cultivated over the previous fifty years: partnership in defending democracy and spreading the Western idea of the free world.

In *Anti-Americanism and the Spirit of European Unity*, Daria Kazarinova posits that over the past decade, a significant reawakening of ‘anti-Americanism’ in the European consciousness has taken place.¹ This explains why ‘anti-Americanism’ is increasingly becoming part of the current European identity. Further, in *Post-war: A History of Europe Since 1945*, Tony Judt emphasizes that during the Cold War period, ‘the presumptively ‘un-American’ qualities of Europe were fast becoming the highest common factor in European self-identification. European values were contrasted with American values. Europe was – or should strive to be – everything that America wasn’t...’²

Juan-Camilo Castillo argues in *The European Security and Defense Policy: Defining the European Union as a Rational Actor in International Security*, that the European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP) envisaged a strengthening of the EU’s defence identity, which would challenge the hegemony of the United States and the

¹ Volker R. Berghahn argues that ‘when American cultural products arrived in Europe for the first time during the 1920s, in quantities that could no longer be ignored, many Europeans rejected them as trashy, vulgar, cheap, mechanical and primitive. By comparison European culture was supposedly sophisticated, time-honoured, refined, profound, mature and – in contrast to the technological optimism of the Americans – conscious of the dark sides of the modernity.’ In this context, American intellectuals traveling to Europe after 1945 ‘wished to project an image of the United States as a nation whose cultural achievements were at least equal to those of Europe.’ (Volker R. Berghahn, *America and the Intellectual Cold Wars in Europe*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001, pp. 287-8).

² Tony Judt, *Post-war: A History of Europe since 1945*, New York : Penguin Press, 2005, p. 790.

traditional identity of the Western world alike. Such a concept, of a separate security entity outside the NATO umbrella, is not well received in Washington. Only with the establishment of the ESDP was the 'supremacy' of NATO challenged. Moreover, Castillo remarks that especially after 1992 (with the signing of the Treaty of the European Union), security mechanisms have been established that would further distinguish Europe from the United States and NATO. Therefore, the EU-NATO joint declaration of 2002 came in response to an increasingly independent European security policy. In sum, Castillo concludes that Europe's military independence is causing the relationships between NATO members to 'disintegrate.'

In her article, *The Role of Political Culture in Shaping Canadian, EU and US Disarmament Initiatives*, Rouba Al-Fattal evaluates Western political culture and the way in which it explains foreign policy choices. She argues that although there are scholars who group Western political culture under one umbrella, such as Samuel Huntington, contemporary Western political culture has important variations. While both Castillo and Al-Fattal highlight the EU's preference for the use of 'soft-power' diplomacy, Al-Fattal further asserts that the United States prefers unilateralism and militarism to solve international disputes. With reference to her case studies (the anti-personnel landmines and the Iranian nuclear issue), Al-Fattal outlines the contrasting approaches of the EU, the United States and Canada, concluding that the presumed common political culture of the Western world is not in itself a sufficient explanation for foreign policy choice.

This trans-Atlantic rift is common to all three papers under review. There is a consensus between the authors that in the post-Cold War era, the EU and U.S. interests have diverged. If the 'anti-Americanism' of the interwar and Cold War periods divided

the West based on presumed cultural differences, Cold War ideology of anti-communism united both sides of the Atlantic. However, when this community of interests ceased to exist, cultural differences took precedence once again in Western Europe, polarizing the identities of the two sides of the Atlantic.