

A DEBATE MISCAST—

OR WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM THE CASE OF THE EDC?

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MARK SHEETZ'S fine article, "Exit Strategies: American Grand Strategy for Postwar European Security," is a valuable contribution to the recent spate of deeply researched and analytically imaginative historical works forcing us to rethink the first decade-and-a-half of the cold war. It also provides a compelling case that the discipline of international relations must take history seriously.¹ The article's superb empirics notwithstanding, it packs too little of a theoretical punch, and what punches it does throw are either off the mark or but glancing blows.

This comment offers three main arguments. First, Sheetz's article is ultimately disappointing because it does not offer even an outline of a theoretical explanation for its central empirical findings. It successfully demonstrates that bipolarity alone did not bring stability to Europe and that the construction of collective European institutions in the early years of the cold war had its roots in American desperation to escape entangling commitments on the continent. The persuasive evidence that Sheetz marshals confounds neorealist arguments, but Sheetz suggests neither why international relations theory got the story of U.S. cold war strategy so wrong nor how it might be put back on the right track. A short response piece is not the place to fill this gap, but I briefly sketch what such an explanation might look like.

Second, the failure of the European Defense Community (EDC) is not, as Sheetz argues, "a near-perfect empirical test of institutional theory in the

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1. Mark S. Sheetz, "Exit Strategies: American Grand Designs for Postwar European Security," *Security Studies* 8, no. 4 (summer 1999): 1–43. All references to this article appear in parentheses in the body of the text. For other works in this vein, see esp. Marc Trachtenberg, *History and Strategy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991); Trachtenberg, *A Constructed Peace: The Making of the European Settlement, 1945–1963* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999); and James McAllister, "The Reluctant Pacifier: America, the German Question, and the Future of Europe" (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1999).

security realm” (28). It is a poor test because neoliberal institutionalism lacks a coherent story of institutional origins. What Sheetz *has* demonstrated is that institutions are hard to create and sustain—a claim few institutionalists would contest. By engaging in the rather sterile debate as to whether institutions matter, Sheetz passes up the opportunity to strike the deepest blows at the present impoverished form of institutional theory.

Third, Sheetz correctly observes that European stability no longer depends on the presence of American troops, but he incorrectly concludes that it is time to pull American troops off the continent. American forces remain in Europe today less to ensure that the continent does not collapse into the vortex of security competition than to underwrite American political influence. The Atlantic Alliance will eventually collapse, but not because the American people will grow tired of bearing the cost with little reward, for the rewards are plain. Rather, NATO’s days are numbered because the European allies are finally beginning to seek their own footing.

NEOREALISM AND THE BALANCE OF VALUES

DRAWING ON impressive archival research, Sheetz’s article raises puzzles for influential strains of international relations theory, but provides little theoretical explanation for its anomalous findings. He argues compellingly that, contrary to the expectations of structural realism, bipolarity did not render the European allies insignificant, nor did it force the superpowers to balance internally. American strategists and policymakers throughout the 1940s and 1950s continually searched for means to create a third pole, a united Europe capable itself of countering the looming Soviet menace without American assistance, without a permanent commitment of American forces to the continent. The various schemes of this period—from the Marshall Plan to the European Coal and Steel Community to the European Defense Community—were all grounded in this premise. Why, however, did American decisionmakers behave in ways that confound the simple structural logic of neorealism? Why did they not opt for the safe route of internal balancing, and why did they instead invest energies and place their hopes in plans for European integration that would permit American disengagement? Why, given the vast gap between European and American resources, did U.S. policymakers care so deeply about the allies?

Sheetz implicitly suggests a number of answers: the traditional American policy of avoiding entangling alliances, and even evading responsibility; the classic American preference for an offshore balancing role (6); a divergent understanding of the implications of bipolarity (14–19); the continued relevance of European power resources in bipolar competition (20–22). There is truth,

of course, in all of these, but a different answer emerges when one turns one's attention to a central flaw in neorealist, especially offensive realist, logic.

Offensive realists assume that "actors heavily discount the future, favoring short-term military preparedness over longer-term objectives when they conflict."² Essential for achieving any other aim, security is primary, and they believe that its pursuit always trumps other claims on a state's resources. Defensive realists may have difficulty logically positing how much security is enough, but offensive realists argue that one can never have enough: they conclude that the uncertainty inherent in the anarchic international system compels states to pursue power endlessly, at least so far as constraints, notably the stopping power of water, permit. In John Mearsheimer's blunt phrase, "great powers do not merely strive to be the strongest of all the great powers, although that is a welcome outcome. Their ultimate aim is to be the hegemon—that is, the only great power in the system."³ State leaders, however, devise grand strategy based not on possibilities and worst-case reasoning but on probabilities. They focus on conceivable threats, and spend substantial resources developing and sustaining intelligence apparatuses charged with divining other states' intentions, no matter that they are ultimately unknowable.⁴ One implication is that the leaders of status-quo powers, able to set their sights below global or even regional hegemony, at times prefer to forfeit increments of security so that they might preserve or further some other value. While it is reasonable to suppose that they will not adopt an untenable security position and buy only butter, they also will not purchase only guns. Beyond some minimum of security, which statesmen can identify in practice even if scholars of international relations cannot in theory, higher levels may come at a price that even potential great powers are not willing to pay.

For example, offensive realists have difficulty accounting for American behavior in the early cold war period. The Eisenhower administration was certainly committed to maintaining American security by keeping Western Europe out of the Soviet orbit, but it was acutely sensitive to the ramifications of increased defense budgets for overall spending, the growing tax burden, and the country's general economic well-being. Dwight D. Eisenhower and John Foster Dulles greatly feared the implications for American domestic politics if

2. Stephen G. Brooks, "Dueling Realisms," *International Organization* 51, no. 3 (summer 1997): 445-77, at 446.

3. For the most rigorous statement of offensive realism, see John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York: Norton, 2001), at 2.

4. See David M. Edelstein, "Choosing Friends and Enemies: Perceptions of Intentions in International Politics" (Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 2000).

the United States became an “American Gibraltar.”⁵ As Eisenhower told the National Security Council (NSC) in September 1953, “we have devised no way of meeting this threat without imposing ever-greater controls on our economy and on the freedom of our people.... The real problem was to devise methods of meeting the Soviet threat and of adopting controls, if necessary, that would not result in our transformation into a garrison state.”⁶ Dulles, his partner in foreign policy making, agreed: reacting to a 1953 Joint Chiefs of Staff proposal for the unilateral redeployment of U.S. troops, Dulles passionately declared to the NSC that “no single country, not even the United States, could, out of its own resources, adequately match the strength of a powerful totalitarian state. We were in no position to extract from our own people what tyrannical rulers could extract from their people. The attempt to do so would ‘bust us.’”⁷ As Truman had put it several years earlier, “If Communism is allowed to absorb the free nations, then we would be isolated from our sources of supply and detached from our friends. Then we would have to take defense measures which might really bankrupt our economy, and change our way of life so that we couldn’t recognize it as American any longer.”⁸ Perhaps they were deluded about the actual strength of the American economy, and perhaps they were influenced by a skewed set of beliefs about the political consequences of higher military spending, but believe they certainly did.

Contrary to the expectations of offensive realism, America’s foreign policy makers were willing to sacrifice security to preserve democracy: rather than fully mobilize the country’s internal resources, they relied on allies and eventually permanently committed American troops to the continent, and they eschewed preventive war. For American decisionmakers of the 1940s and 1950s (indeed, for state leaders at all times), the question, as always, was security on what terms. As Paul Kennedy notes, grand strategy is “about the balancing of ends and means, both in peacetime and in wartime. It was not enough for statesmen to consider how to win a war, but what the costs (in the largest sense of the word) would be.”⁹ They presumed, rightly or wrongly, that

5. See Aaron Friedberg, *In the Shadow of the State: America’s Anti-Statism and Its Cold War Grand Strategy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000); and Michael J. Hogan, *A Cross of Iron: Harry S. Truman and the Origins of the National Security State* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

6. Minutes, NSC Meeting, 24 September 1953, *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS): 1952–1954*, I, 469.

7. Minutes, NSC Meeting, 31 March 1953, *FRUS: 1952–1954*, II, 276.

8. Quoted in Melvyn Leffler, *A Preponderance of Power: National Security, the Truman Administration, and the Cold War* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992), 13.

9. Paul M. Kennedy, “Grand Strategy in War and Peace: Toward a Broader Definition,” in *Grand Strategies in War and Peace*, ed. Paul M. Kennedy (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991), 4.

America could by itself extract sufficient internal resources for the struggle only at the cost of the liberty for which thousands of Americans had died less than a decade before. If the United States could not fully exploit its national capabilities in the bipolar contest, smaller increments of material power resources would become critical: hence the United States turned to acquiring as allies and reviving Western Europe, and considered means of undermining Soviet influence in Eastern Europe.¹⁰ Perceiving a tradeoff between security and democracy, they opted for a middle ground that left alliance politics, both Soviet and American, central to U.S. foreign policy. Ignoring the balance of values to which real-world statesmen are necessarily so sensitive, offensive realist accounts of foreign policy are bound to be inadequate, even under conditions of intense security competition. Reconstructing how statesmen perceive such tradeoffs, how they delimit the boundaries of security, and how they weigh contending international and domestic pressures cannot be assumed, but must itself become the focus of inquiry.¹¹

TOWARD A REALIST INSTITUTIONALISM

STILL MORE problematic, however, is Sheetz's characterization of his study of the EDC as demonstrating that in the nasty world of international security, institutions do not matter very much at all: "the greater certainty provided by institutions was insufficient to overcome visceral fears of a sovereign Germany.... [French] misgivings stemmed from the classic problem of cooperation under anarchy" (33, 35). For Sheetz, the failure to establish the EDC speaks to the efficacy of international institutions (6). Sheetz, however, fundamentally misunderstands core institutionalist hypotheses, confuses efficacy

10. On the cold war American fascination with Eastern Europe, see Peter Grose, *Operation Rollback: America's War Behind the Iron Curtain* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2000); Ronald R. Krebs, "Liberation à la Finland: Reexamining Eisenhower Administration Objectives in Eastern Europe," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 20, no. 3 (September 1997): 1–26; Krebs, *Dueling Visions: U.S. Strategy Toward Eastern Europe Under Eisenhower* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2001); and Gregory D. Mitrovich, *Undermining the Kremlin: America's Strategy to Subvert the Soviet Bloc, 1947–1956* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000).

11. There is, of course, an immense and burgeoning literature on precisely these questions from a variety of different theoretical orientations. For collections that address such matters, see, among many others, Glenn Chafetz, Michael Spirtas, and Benjamin Frankel, eds., *The Origins of National Interests* (London: Frank Cass, 1999); Peter B. Evans, Harold K. Jacobson, and Robert Putnam, eds., *Double-Edged Diplomacy: International Bargaining and Domestic Politics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993); Peter J. Katzenstein, ed., *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996); and Jutta Weldes, Mark Laffey, Hugh Gusterson, and Raymond Duvall, eds., *Cultures of Insecurity: States, Communities, and the Production of Danger* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999).

with origins, and consequently does not subject institutionalism to a meaningful test. More importantly, by framing his argument around the old question of whether institutions matter, Sheetz fails to push the institutions debate forward.

The failure of the EDC is a cautionary tale regarding the difficulty of setting up powerful institutions capable of overcoming the impulses of anarchy, particularly in the realm of security. The case, however, cannot address questions of institutional efficacy, as Sheetz would like it to, because the EDC was never ratified and, hence, never institutionalized: in other words, it never got the chance to prove whether it could get the job done and foster further cooperation among its members. Institutional theory has less to say about the reasons for the collapse of the EDC than it does about the cooperation that might have followed the successful establishment of the defense community. If the predictions of institutional theory were, as Sheetz suggests, disconfirmed every time states failed to form a potentially valuable institution, there would be no point in even beginning the discussion: we would all already know the answer.

In fact, neoliberal institutionalists, Sheetz's primary target, have failed to put forward a coherent and distinctive explanatory theory of institutional origins. The functionalist version popularized by Robert Keohane presented a just-so story of institutions' formation. Functionalist accounts of institutions have explanatory power either when strong feedback mechanisms are in place or when actors invoke the anticipated effects as reasons for designing the institutions. The former is very rarely operative in international politics, since foolish policy or the failure to broker mutually beneficial cooperation rarely eliminates states from the system.¹² The latter poses almost insurmountable demands on the data; moreover, it tells only half the story, since functions could explain only the demand for institutions and regimes, not their supply.¹³ Finally, the reliance on the economic metaphor has naturally produced a post hoc ergo propter hoc logical fallacy. Alluding to Keohane's formulation, Sheetz asserts that there was "ample" supply and demand for a European security regime like the EDC, but the implicit model provides no a priori criteria for judging the sufficiency of supply and demand. Supply and demand are deemed ample if an

12. This has been especially true since the Second World War. See Tanisha Fazal, "Born to Lose and Doomed to Survive: State Death and Survival in the International System" (Ph.D. diss., Stanford University, 2001); Robert O. Keohane, *After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984) 81–82; Friedrich Kratochwil, "Of Systems, Boundaries, and Territoriality: An Inquiry into the Formation of the State System," *World Politics* 39, no. 1 (October 1986): 27–52; and Mark W. Zacher, "The Territorial Integrity Norm: International Boundaries and the Use of Force," *International Organization* 55, no. 2 (spring 2001): 215–50.

13. Robert O. Keohane, "The Demand for International Regimes," *International Organization* 36, no. 2 (spring 1982): 325–55.

institution emerges, and one or the other is obviously insufficient if an institution does not. *Pave* Sheetz, the neoliberal account of institutional origins cannot be proved or disproved: it is by definition true.

Sheetz can be forgiven for thinking that one could test this neoliberal story of institution formation, because institutionalists themselves have proven slippery on this score. Pressed by realist critiques that institutions are epiphenomenal and that the distribution of material power resources bears all the explanatory weight, Keohane and Martin baldly claimed that “institutional theory has a coherent account of both the creation of institutions and their effects: institutions are created by states *because of* their anticipated effects on patterns of behavior.”¹⁴ Earlier statements, however, were far more circumspect, and rightly so. In one of the first versions of the argument, Keohane was most forthright about its limits:

My use of the word “functions” here is meant to designate consequences of a certain pattern of activity, particularly in terms of the utility of the activity; it is not to be interpreted as an explanation of the behavior in question.... Understanding the function of international regimes helps, however, to explain why actors have an incentive to create them, and may therefore help to make behavior intelligible within a rational-choice mode of analysis that emphasizes the role of incentives and constraints.¹⁵

In other words, the functionalist account explains institution formation not by suggesting mechanisms that bear a close relationship to actual causal processes, but by rendering institutions “intelligible” to political scientists from within a particular tradition, by satisfying the discipline’s methodological demands.

The core contribution of institutionalist theory—an explanation of international cooperation induced by institutions through increased transparency, greater issue-linkage, reduced transaction costs, iterated interaction under a longer shadow of the future, and so on—is, in fact, perfectly consistent with realist accounts of origins.¹⁶ It is no accident that Keohane’s seminal work was entitled *After Hegemony*, and he acknowledged that realist factors powerfully shaped the institutional order: “hegemony is less important for the continua-

14. Robert O. Keohane and Lisa L. Martin, “The Promise of Institutional Theory,” *International Security* 20, no. 1 (summer 1995): 39–51, at 46. See also John J. Mearsheimer, “The False Promise of International Institutions,” *International Security* 19, no. 3 (winter 1994/95): 5–49.

15. Keohane, “The Demand for International Regimes,” 333.

16. Because origins are treated largely as exogenous, institutional theory is also compatible with idealist explanations of institutional creation. See, for example, Steven Weber, “Origins of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development,” *International Organization* 48, no. 1 (winter 1994): 1–38.

tion of cooperation, once begun, than for its creation.... [Institutionalist theory] explains the continuation of existing regimes even after the conditions that facilitated their creation have disappeared: regimes acquire value for states because they perform important functions and because they are difficult to create or reconstruct.”¹⁷ The story of a hegemon sponsoring institutions that further its own interests as well as those of others, of a state doing well by doing good, of institutions married to power, is familiar to—and in fact originated with—realists.¹⁸ Implicitly recognizing that his theory spoke far more persuasively about effects than about origins, Keohane introduced a collection of essays by arguing that “the principal thesis of this book is that variations in the institutionalization of world politics exert significant impacts on the behavior of governments. In particular, patterns of cooperation and discord can be understood only in the context of institutions that help define the meaning and importance of state action.”¹⁹ When it comes to institutional origins, realists and neoliberals often occupy the same ground.

When it comes to institutional effects, realists and neoliberals correctly file into opposing camps—though not necessarily the right ones. As Robert Jervis has recently summarized the state of the field, “Neoliberals think that establishing an institution can increase cooperation. Realists believe that this is not so much a false statement as a false remedy, because the states will establish an institution if and only if they seek the goals that the institution will help them reach.”²⁰ Realists have yielded the “institutions matter” side of the debate to neoliberals, but they have thereby squandered a rich opportunity to suggest that features of institutions may sponsor not only cooperation but also conflict. State leaders may consciously turn to institutions to further their interests, but institutions also exert unintended effects that may prove salutary or perverse. Institutions may themselves become the site of political contest, and these forums for cooperation may, contrary to the intentions of their creators, contribute to a broadening and deepening of international tensions. There is an emerging consensus that the appropriate and useful question is no longer

17. Keohane, *After Hegemony*, 12–14, 50.

18. See David A. Lake, “Ulysses’s Triumph: American Power and the New World Order,” *Security Studies* 8, nos. 2/3 (winter 1998/99–spring 1999): 44–78; Lake, *Entangling Relations: American Foreign Policy in Its Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999); G. John Ikenberry, *After Victory: Institutions, Strategic Restraint, and the Rebuilding of Order after Major Wars* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001).

19. Keohane, *International Institutions and State Power: Essays in International Relations Theory* (Boulder: Westview, 1989), 2.

20. Jervis, “Realism, Neoliberalism, and Cooperation: Understanding the Debate,” *International Security* 24, no. 1 (summer 1999): 54.

whether institutions matter, but *how* institutions matter.²¹ Realists should not reject the insights of neoliberal institutionalist theory, but they should suggest appropriate scope conditions for these hypotheses, thereby clearing space for their own uniquely skeptical perspective. In other words, realists must begin to develop their own version of institutionalism that subsumes neoliberalism while stretching out in very different directions, perhaps thereby pointing the way toward an integrated theory of institutions.²²

POLITICAL INFLUENCE AND A MILITARY PRESENCE

FINALLY, SHEETZ'S essay closes with a plea for the United States to withdraw its forces from the continent: Russia can muster but a fraction of the power of the old Soviet Union, the German problem is a thing of the past, and the American troop presence is unnecessary. Gliding smoothly into policy critique, Sheetz argues that the United States must stop trying "to strangle fledgling European initiatives and instead encourage greater reliance on the United States" (39–43)—but are American leaders so obtuse, so insensitive to the changes in Europe over the last fifty years? Do they really believe Europe is today incapable of meeting its own security challenges? At the level of explanation, Sheetz implicitly suggests that American troops remain in Europe today because of either stupidity or institutional inertia.

There is, however, a third plausible and intuitively more persuasive explanation for the lingering American presence in Europe after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. During the cold war, the American commitment to the continent cut both ways: even as it encouraged Europeans to ride free on American efforts, it was also an important weapon in the American arsenal of influence. The United States also continues to wield that weapon today. At least for the moment, it is apparent that Europe still needs the United States.²³ Whether humanitarian or geostrategic interests are at stake, the separate European states have shown themselves incapable of launching and sustaining complex military operations. The recent crises in the Balkans threatened to dump thousands of unwanted refugees in European states ambivalent about those immigrants they

21. Lisa L. Martin and Beth Simmons, "Theories and Empirical Studies of International Institutions," *International Organization* 52, no. 4 (autumn 1998): 729–57.

22. For initial efforts in this direction, see Ronald R. Krebs, "Perverse Institutionalism: NATO and the Greco-Turkish Conflict," *International Organization* 53, no. 2 (spring 1999): 343–77; and Randall Schweller and David Priess, "A Tale of Two Realisms: Expanding the Institutions Debate," *Mershon International Studies Review* 41, suppl. 1 (spring 1997): 1–32.

23. Robert J. Art, "Why Western Europe Needs the United States and NATO," *Political Science Quarterly* 111, no. 1 (spring 1996): 1–39.

already have, and some even feared that the traditional Balkan tinder-box might again light Europe aflame. The Europeans, however, could not rise to the challenge, collectively or individually, in the absence of American political leadership and military capacity. The follow-on interventions in Bosnia and Kosovo highlighted the difficulty of forging consensus among several sovereign states, and the Kosovo operation in particular revealed the various debilitating weaknesses of Europe's armed forces—poor training, inadequate lift capacity, meager intelligence assets, weak command-and-control.

Influence is a coat of many colors, but the stitching is always of the same thread. As Albert Hirschman insightfully noted long ago, the more dependent party—that is, the one who needs the relationship most, who stands to lose the most if the relationship is severed—occupies the weaker bargaining position, even if it possesses greater material power resources.²⁴ Incapable of quelling trouble in its own backyard, Europe is reliant on American military capacity, and that is a source of American influence that transcends narrow military questions. Perhaps America's leaders are not so dense after all: they understand that the American presence is not just a brutish military machine, but one means, albeit limited, of compelling Europeans to toe the American line.²⁵ Even if this logic reflects American thinking, however, the policy may still be wrong-headed, for the payoff in influence may not be worth the financial and political expense of maintaining substantial forces on the European continent. That would require fine-grained and domain-specific analysis of the additional increments of influence that America's military presence brings.²⁶ These calculations aside, bring the boys home and the coat of influence becomes that much less colorful.

The U.S. presence in Europe, however, has a limited future for reasons that have nothing to do with fatigue born of American over-extension. It is not “the structural constraints of multipolarity” (8) that will eventually compel the United States to leave Europe, but the dynamics of unipolarity. At least in part because American dominance is so overwhelming along so many power dimensions and in part because of the relatively benign nature of American

24. Albert O. Hirschman, *National Power and the Structure of Foreign Trade* (1945; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980).

25. This is closely related to what Robert Art has termed “linkage politics.” See Art, “American Foreign Policy and the Fungibility of Force,” *Security Studies* 5, no. 4 (summer 1996): 7–42.

26. On the need for greater specificity about the *domain* of power, particularly in international relations, see David A. Baldwin, *Paradoxes of Power* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989). For a recent debate, see Baldwin, “Force, Fungibility, and Influence”; and Robert J. Art, “Force and Fungibility Reconsidered,” *Security Studies* 8, no. 4 (summer 1999): 173–89.

hegemony, it is unlikely that classic balancing dynamics will resurface soon.²⁷ It is, however, only natural that, faced with a permissive post-cold war security environment, Europeans would chafe at overt manifestations of American power and assert their own standing.

Although the Europeans have been slow to develop their military capacity and reduce their dependence on the United States, their poor showing in Kosovo sparked a turn in that direction, and the recent campaign against the Taliban and al-Qaeda reinforced those lessons by highlighting the gap between American and European military capabilities. Resentment of the United States and its perceived arrogance is on the rise, across the globe but especially in Europe, and for the first time, Europeans have begun to take steps toward an exclusively European security structure, toward putting some flesh on the skeleton of the much-derided European Security and Defense Initiative. The Europeans, with the possible exception of the French, universally affirm that the proposed 60,000-strong rapid reaction force, affiliated with the European Union (EU), would take a back seat to NATO and that it would not threaten their transatlantic ties, but this has hardly allayed American concerns. And perhaps rightly so, for Javier Solana, the former NATO secretary-general charged with transforming the plan into concrete reality by 2003, has declared that it is time for “a new equilibrium between Europe and the United States and Canada.”²⁸ After decades of nurturing European collective action and complaining about free-riding, American policymakers and pundits suddenly find themselves in the odd position of criticizing the Europeans for doing exactly what they had urged all along: shortly after arriving in office, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld confessed to being a “little worried” that the EU’s plans might harm NATO.²⁹ It is of course too soon for prognostication. So far the Europeans have not moved much beyond purely rhetorical commitments, and it is an open question whether they will ultimately prove willing to sacrifice their freedom of action, beef up their defense budgets, and put aside their cur-

27. On the durability of unipolarity, see William C. Wohlforth, “The Stability of a Unipolar World,” *International Security* 24, no. 1 (summer 1999): 5–41. On “social purpose” and hegemony, see John Ruggie, “International Regimes, Transactions, and Change: Embedded Liberalism in the Postwar Economic Order,” *International Organization* 36, no. 2 (spring 1982): 379–415.

28. In general, of course, Solana has hummed the typical conciliatory European melody. Solana quoted in John Bolton, “The European Threat to NATO’s Future,” *Financial Times*, 11 February 2000, 19; see also Javier Solana, “Europe Must Build Its Military Muscle,” *Jane’s Defence Weekly*, 14 June 2000.

29. William Drozdiak, “U.S. Tepid on European Defense Plan,” *Washington Post*, 7 March 2000, A1; Rumsfeld quoted in Toby Harnden, “Cook Assures U.S. that EU Force is Not a NATO Rival,” *Daily Telegraph*, 7 February 2001, 16.

rent and historical quarrels.³⁰ Yet although there will no doubt be bumps along the way, the trends seem to be moving in that direction.

CONCLUSION

ARTICLES SUCH as Mark Sheetz's "Exit Strategies," grounded in painstaking empirical research and focused on important historical episodes, should have a home in political science, but they should combine their empirical rigor with theoretical ambition and precision. Despite the article's merits, Sheetz does not provide a cogent theoretical explanation for his central finding, and his theoretical framing of the case—as a powerful test of neoliberal institutionalist hypotheses—is misguided. This framing is not only flawed but, more important, unproductive. It is high time for international relations theorists, realists and liberals alike, to move beyond the sterile question of whether formal institutions matter and instead expand the menu of mechanisms of institutional impact.

30. On the difficulties of bringing the rapid reaction force to life, see Charles Wolf Jr. and Benjamin Zycher, *European Military Prospects, Economic Constraints, and the Rapid Reaction Force* (Santa Monica: RAND, 2001); and Judy Dempsey and David White, "Not Rapid Enough: Lack of Money and Clear Goals is Hampering Plans for an EU Defence Force," *Financial Times*, 19 November 2001, 23.