The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor sparked the establishment of a military alliance that would eventually destroy the fascist regimes in Tokyo, Berlin, and Rome. Although no single event led to NATO’s creation in 1949, the transatlantic community did share a common threat perception that sustained cooperative relations until the collapse of that danger in 1991. In the aftermath of the Soviet Union, no significant galvanizing threat emerged to unite the Alliance during the 1990s. However, on September 11, 2001, an opportunity did present itself. Just as the surprise attack on U.S. forces in Hawaii and the growing threat of Soviet power following World War II united North America and Europe, the rise of the Al Qaeda and the shocking attacks on Washington and New York were thought surely to rejuvenate NATO. The attacks presented a real opportunity for NATO and its members to demonstrate that the organization had an effective and important role to play in global politics. If North Americans and Europeans could find common ground in identifying and responding to a major threat, no greater could have been designed than the one presented by the Al Qaeda on September 11, 2001.

Transatlantic relations did not pass this test. The solidarity in the days immediately following 9/11 proved short-lived. Instead of unifying and responding effectively to the new dangers in the system, the member-states of NATO experienced their greatest sustained internal conflict since the signing of the Washington Treaty in 1949.

This chapter traces transatlantic relations from that crystal clear New York morning in fall 2001 through late fall 2002 when storm clouds gathered over Iraq. The year was extraordinary by any measure
and tested NATO as never before. Alliance members endorsed and supported U.S.-led operations in Afghanistan; however, Washington’s decision to limit and marginalize NATO’s involvement was a serious blow to the Alliance. A more significant challenge to transatlantic relations emerged as the Bush administration articulated its grander strategy for the war on terror in early 2002. Many throughout North America and Europe were taken aback on January 29, 2002 when President Bush bluntly declared “Our war on terror is well begun but only begun.”\(^1\) European elites had long confronted terror groups and, though prepared to engage the Al Qaeda, they were not seeking a broader war to include “rogue” states in pursuit of weapons of mass destruction. This fundamental split between Washington and most of its traditional allies would prove damaging to NATO. Though individual NATO member-states contributed to the U.S.-led war and occupation of Afghanistan in 2001 and 2002, NATO, as an organization, was largely relegated to the sidelines. By the end of 2002, with war looming in Iraq, NATO governments were locked in bitter disputes.

**NATO Invokes Article V**

Global reaction to the attacks on September 11, 2001 was largely immediate and overwhelmingly supportive of the United States. From its NATO allies Washington received messages of heart-felt condolence and offers of aid and assistance. European and Canadian leaders publicly declared that the attacks on the United States constituted an assault on all democratic states and peoples. From 10 Downing Street, the British prime minister, Tony Blair, declared, “This was an attack not just on a number of buildings in the United States of America, but on the very notion of democracy.”\(^2\) Speaking for the European Union, Belgium’s foreign minister, Louis Michel, asserted, “We were all victims of this attack.”\(^3\)

Both NATO and EU ministers were called into emergency session as fires continued to rage in Manhattan and at the Pentagon. The organizations quickly offered the United States access to resources available to their member-governments. Declaring “there will be no safe haven for terrorists and their sponsors,”\(^4\) EU foreign ministers affirmed that their governments would “spare no effort to help identify, bring to justice and punish those responsible.”\(^5\) In Brussels, discussion at NATO headquarters quickly turned to the question of invoking Article V, the mutual defense clause of the Washington Treaty. The speed and decision to convene discussions centering on Article V was potentially momentous for NATO. Throughout the