The chaotic situation which arose as a consequence of the Second World War contributed to the creation of an association of core nations. This so-called 'Western alliance' was to endure longer than its historical predecessor, the Holy Alliance of the nineteenth century. The postwar arrangements transformed the relationship of the countries involved. Under American leadership, friends and defeated foes became united in a new alliance, while the former wartime ally, the Soviet Union, became the adversary.

THE ROOSEVELT APPROACH

This structural evolution was in marked contrast to the dominating American conceptualisation of the future world before 1945. With Franklin Delano Roosevelt as president, the attitude toward allies and enemies had been characterised by a punitive approach towards the Axis Powers and a benevolent disposition towards the Soviet Union. At the Teheran Conference (December 1943), President Roosevelt had hinted to Joseph Stalin that the USSR could expect to be rewarded for eventual participation in the military defeat of Japan in the Far East. Soviet interest lay in a return of the territories Russia had given up as a result of the defeat in the Russo-Japanese War in 1905 (Armstrong, 1983, 31ff). Per-
haps not entirely trusting the people around him, the American president increasingly relied on personal diplomacy in the last years of the war. At the Yalta Conference in February 1945, with victory in sight, the understanding between the two heads of state was cemented. In order to avoid internal discussions as to the alliance’s future in the Far East, President Roosevelt declined to inform subordinate levels in the foreign policy-making apparatus that Stalin—in a quid pro quo agreement—had pledged early entrance in the anti-Japanese war on the promise of special economic privileges in Manchuria and US acquiescence to a return of the South Sakhalin and Kurile islands to Soviet jurisdiction. Only because the information was passed on by the official American translator at the conference did US foreign policy planners find out about this agreement (Schaller, 1985, 7).

Concerning the war in Europe and the approaching defeat of Nazi Germany, the American president agreed to the Soviet quest for German reparations to an amount of approximately 20 billion dollars. Understanding was reached on that occasion that this question would be settled once the apparatus for the economic administration of Germany had been put into place.

In early 1944, President Roosevelt entrusted his friend, Treasury Secretary Henry Morgenthau, Jr, with the task of making plans for postwar Germany. The recommendations of the Informal Policy Committee on Germany (IPCOG) under the latter’s responsibility centred on the elimination of central political authority, the dismantling of heavy industry, and the division of the country into occupation zones under the administration of the wartime allies. The dominating idea behind the scheme had been to reduce Germany to a ‘pastoral’ state unable to participate in future conflicts. In practice, however, the policy became affected by the sudden death of President Roosevelt and the loss of influence of its architect.

The new American president, Harry S. Truman, approved directive JSC 1067 which was sent to the head of the US Military Government, responsible for the administration of