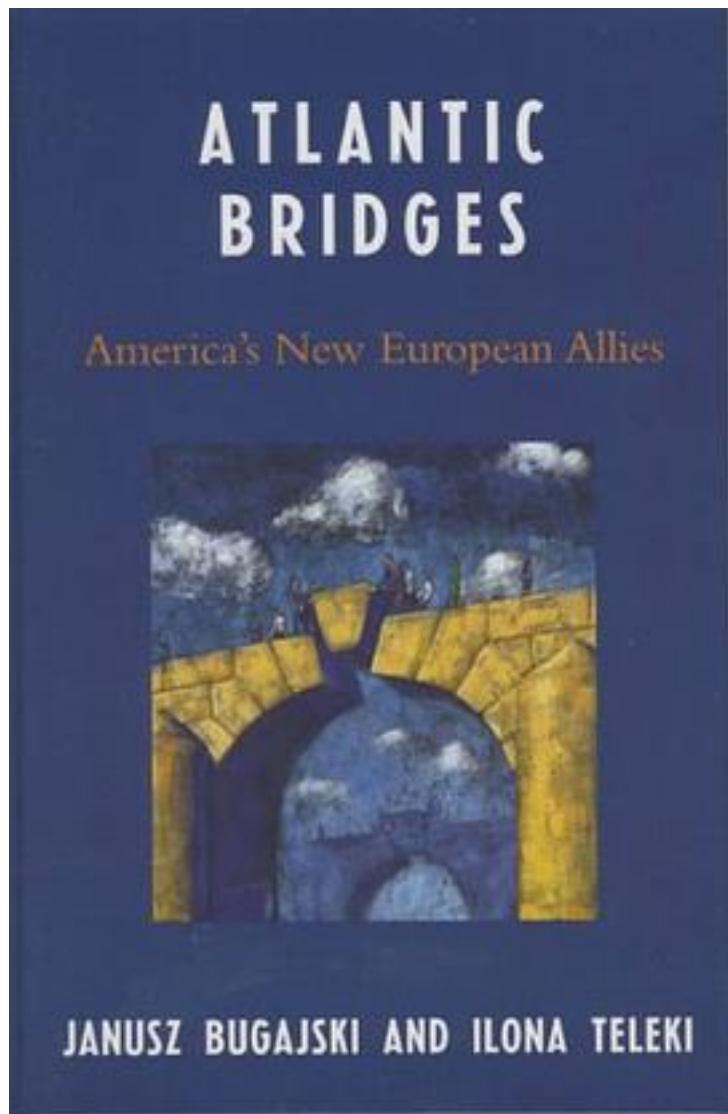


# Atlantic Bridges



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In the post-9/11 era of heightened security awareness, conflicting strategies for containing and combating security risks have strained relations between the United States and the European Union despite common goals. These differences between the U.S. and the EU do not signal that the alliance should be discarded, as many fundamental U.S. and European interests are reconcilable-and an uncertain and disunited Europe, distracted and alienated by its internal differences, could become even more problematic for Washington. Instead, to maintain dependable partners within the EU, America should focus greater attention on its new allies in central and eastern Europe (CEE), who will be a guiding force in the continuing development of U.S.-EU relations. The CEE countries have generally exhibited a more pro-U.S. approach than many of their western European neighbors; however, public opinion and political positions are shifting, and in several states opinions are converging with opinions in the older EU countries. Looking toward the UK as a role model, other CEE countries have sought to emulate London's position by avoiding stark choices between the United States and Europe and by successfully combining both orientations in their foreign policies. A dividing line may be emerging between the wider Baltic region and the central European region, a line that is most evident in perceptions of instability along the eastern borders of central and eastern Europe and a sense of a growing threat from Russia. The U.S. must resist the temptation to focus its diplomatic efforts on bilateral agreements with those European countries in closest alignment to it, and instead use these dependable and durable partners among the CEE states to develop more predictable and productive relations with the EU for the sake of long-term stability. To accomplish this strategic objective, Washington needs to refocus the NATO alliance, ensure U.S.-EU complementarity, jointly pursue the expansion of democratic systems, reward its new allies, and

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目录:

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