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PANEL 5: TRANSATLANTIC RELATIONS AND INSTITUTIONAL ISSUES

**The Warsaw Pact, NATO and the End of the Cold War**

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Reflections on NATO and the end of the bipolar conflict usually focus on the post-Cold War period, trying to analyze how the Atlantic Alliance continued to exist after the disappearance of its original *raison d'être*, i.e. the Soviet threat. However, these approaches overlook the fact that thinking about the future of alliances on both sides of the Iron Curtain began well before the 1991 dissolution of the Warsaw Pact. In particular, from 1987, within the context of a revived concept of the “Common European Home”, the Soviets came to advocate the gradual “simultaneous dissolution” of both the WTO and NATO as a means of creating a new general European system of collective security. This contribution will thus analyze the origins, content and ultimate failure of the Soviet proposals as well as the American reactions to these initiatives. It will show that the process that led to the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact, the continuity of NATO and the post-Cold War European security architecture was not necessarily preordained.