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BACK TO REALITIES

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BACK TO REALITIES

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For the last couple of years, The United States and Europe had diverging agenda. Washington after 9/11 decided to implement a radical Wilsonian agenda of imposing democracy and freedom, especially in the Middle East. If democracy promotion is not a foreign concept inside the EU, Europeans, however, by and large, remained opposed to regime change by force and refused to endorse the American way of expanding freedom. The answer of the Bush administration to this new 'day of infamy' displayed permanent trends as well as new specific features of U.S. foreign policy. Among the former, several old habits can easily be identified: a Manichean approach to the definition of the enemy, a global interpretation of the threat, an ideological perspective in framing the challenge, a missionary zeal in fulfilling its new found mission with the usual premium on power, technology and warfare as solutions to the new security dilemmas raised by international terrorism.¹ Among the latter, several innovations stand out: a sovereign prerogative to proclaim the right and the wrong for the world, a clear emphasis on pre-emption that became prevention in the case of Iraq, and clear choice of a unilateral approach to achieve U.S. objectives. This unilateralism derived from a combination of an absolute confidence in U.S. supremacy in the world and a sudden but simultaneous vulnerability.

The revisionism of the United States and the more status-quo oriented attitude of the Europeans had dramatic consequences in institutional terms. For the Atlantic Alliance, the Iraqi crisis was especially damaging. For the first time, the rule of consensus had been broken, three countries have refused to assist Turkey and the NAC was unable to resolve the dispute without deferring it to the DPC where France does not have a seat.² For the status quo powers, divergent security interests raised the entrapment dilemma where they could be asked to participate in a war that they did not want. For the revisionist actor, it is the opposite, the chain-gang dilemma, where the allies are seen as slowing factors and obstacles to its autonomy. Here lays the deepest force behind the NATO divide.³ The solidarity among Atlantic members has clearly vanished. More importantly, trust inside the transatlantic community is at an all time low. The shadow of Iraq is haunting current transatlantic relations. This has of course serious consequences on possible common missions.

¹ Moreover, any shock leads to a dramatic reappraisal and extension of security interests. See Gaddis John Lewis, *Surprise, Security and the American Experience*, Harvard University Press, 2004.

² For a detailed review, see Gordon Philip H. and Jeremy Shapiro, *Allies at War: America, Europe and the Crisis over Iraq*, Washington:, Brookings Institution Book, McGraw-Hill, 2004, esp. pp. 155-182; Elizabeth Pond, *Friendly Fire: The Near-Death of the Transatlantic Alliance*, Washington:, Brookings Institution Press, 2003 and Haine Jean-Yves, *Les Etats-Unis ont-ils besoin d'alliés ?*, Paris, Payot, 2004. Yet, a deal was nearly concluded before Christmas, whereby France proposed that if the US wanted to go to war, it should do so under Resolution 1441 and not under a second UN Security Council resolution. In that case, the French would agree to disagree. The idea was to go for a Kosovo scenario, where no formal vote would have taken place. President Bush refused because T. Blair needed a second resolution that ultimately never came.

³ On these dilemma, see Christensen Thomas J., et Snyder Jack., "Chain Gangs and Passed Bucks: Predicting Alliance Patterns in Multipolarity", *International Organization*, Spring 1990, Vol. 44, n°2, pp. 137-168.

Back from the Brink?

For the European Union, the crisis in Iraq had a paradoxical effect. On one hand, the Union has been essentially irrelevant during the crisis. War is a time for nations, not institutions. The Union's attitude was only reactive: if it had set out its own definition of 'material breach' of Resolution 1441, specified the conditions under which force might be used and laid down a precise timetable for action, it would have been able to foresee events and to strengthen its position in Washington. Instead, EU foreign ministers decided to formally hand over the Iraqi affair to the U.N., without addressing the strategic case at hand. By doing so, they in fact gave a free hand to the permanent European members of the U.N. Security Council, France and Great Britain, i.e., the two countries with the most opposite views vis-à-vis the United States. Not very surprisingly, London and Paris decided to focus on U.N. legitimacy, while ignoring the European framework. In this configuration, the Union was thus irrelevant. The crisis demonstrated moreover that a grand strategy for Europe based on a reaction to U.S. foreign policy is doomed to fail. Balancing, bandwagoning, hiding, all these options could only lead to internal divisions.

On the other hand, these very divisions during the enlargement process and the Constitution exercise led to the Solana Paper, an historic document whereby the Union for the first time agreed on a minimal strategic framework. At the peak of the crisis, the Union and NATO finalized the Berlin Plus agreement, which allowed the Union to act in Macedonia and today Bosnia. After Madrid, the Constitution itself saw considerable progress on security and defence issues with the European Defence Agency, a counter-terrorism coordinator, the Solidarity clause, the 'permanent structured cooperation' process. This recovery from the brink is however fragile. The ghosts of Tervueren, the deep mistrust between some members of the Union, the deleterious game of hijacking institutions for protecting national interests, all this contributes to a very inward-looking and process-oriented Europe at a moment where its geopolitical responsibilities will continue to grow. As stated in the Solana paper, the Union is "inevitably" a global actor. Yet, in security and defence policy, the Union is still in its infancy.

In Washington, the last six months have seen a departure from the most radical and revolutionary neoconservative ideas. The nomination of R. Blackwill last Spring in Iraq, the re-engagement, however limited, into NATO politics in Istanbul in June, the willingness to build new bridges with traditional allies and the new emphasis on diplomacy indicated a change, however modest, in US foreign policies. The Bush second administration team signalled a serious shift in its strategic outlook. Traditional Kissinger-Scowcroft type of realists are back at the top of the administration. The President's next month trip in Germany and in Brussels will clearly demonstrate re-engagement in Europe.

Yet, the events in Iraq will continue to absorb the bulk of U.S. efforts in the region. The unfolding of events in Fallujah, the spreading of violence elsewhere seem to indicate that at least on the short term, the military option on the ground is likely to be the preferred tactic in order to permit the Iraqi election to go ahead as scheduled for 30 January 2005. In that respect, Washington faces a Vietnam-like dilemma: the more you act, the more you are likely to provoke opposition. If this is true, the opposition to the war may increase in the United States. Moreover, the heartland constituency of President Bush is not really interested in a democratic Iraq, and there could be some pressures to cut and run if casualties continue to increase. Consequently, it is likely that

the US may try to reach out for more burden-shifting to and cooperation with Europe. It is thus up to Europe to offer a unified response. If not, the divide and rule strategy is likely to grow. This in turn might lead to a new burden-sharing policy whereby more Muslim countries would be called to take part in the stabilization process. In other words, a U-turn in doctrine is unlikely, but a shift in practice may occur.

Ultimately, international events, particularly concerning Iraq and the Middle East, rather than European preferences will determinate US foreign policies. Moreover, shocks and contingencies could always transform foreign policy orientation. Before 11 September, the foreign policy agenda of the first Bush administration was rather modest and isolationist in tone. Another shock like 9/11 could have devastating effects on what is left of the transatlantic alliance, which could again be divided on the interpretation of what is a legitimate use of force.

Divided on Strategy and Overstretched in Capabilities?

Europe and the United States have roughly the same perception of international threats, yet important caveats are still in order. Five major threats were identified by the EU security strategy: international terrorism, WMD proliferation, regional conflicts, failed states, and organized crime. In such an environment, the Union recognized that the traditional form of defence, -territorial line in a Cold War fashion-, is a thing of the past. The first line of defence now lies abroad. If this analysis may sound familiar in comparison to the US National Security Strategy of September 2002, the message to Washington is in fact seriously nuanced. First, Europe is at peace, not at war. Even if the possibility of an Al-Qaeda attack against the territory of the Union is duly underlined, the document is not a call for arms or an appeal for homeland defence. Second, comparisons between the Solana document and the NSS of the US reveals crucial differences on the ways and means to counter international threats. Europe paid just lip service to the spread of democracy.⁴ By opposing regime change, it underlines the pre-eminence of stability over democratisation. By refusing pre-emption (Germany did indeed change the wording of the first Solana draft), it relies on diplomacy and preventive engagement to solve international crises. By stressing effective multilateralism, the Union relies more on international institutions than on its own capacity for actions. Briefly put, in Europe there is much emphasis in ethics and not enough on actions. In the US, it is currently the other way around. One may even argue that the Europeans understand the world better but they don't know what they want, while the US does not understand the world but has no doubt about what to do.

In this context, current missions revealed specific approaches and minimal consensus among the transatlantic community's members. For Washington, the highest priority remained Iraq where the war of choice has become a conflict of necessity. Combined with Afghanistan, these two wars will continue to swallow the bulk of American military efforts. Hence, calls for a new and more balanced burden-sharing will likely continue. For Europe, the Balkans remained the theatre of necessity while Africa will become the theatre of choice. The difficult balance regional obligations and international duties will in fact determine the response Europe would give to the United States.

⁴ See Bayles and Gowan.

As far as alliance and institutions are concerned, NATO highest priority will remain Afghanistan. The current 7000 troops operation has indeed strained the Alliance and revealed dramatically insufficient capabilities of European members. Yet, with all the deficiencies, NATO will expand its PRT counter-clockwise in Afghanistan and sooner than later ISAF and Enduring Freedom will merge. The UNSC 1510 did not foresee any time limit to the NATO's assistance mission. Indeed, the Afghan operation is for the long term (decade rather than years). As a military organization, NATO will thus be mainly focused on delivering members commitments in this area. The other main task will continue to be Kosovo where the worsening situation will likely call for an expansion rather than a reduction of NATO military presence. These two operations will severely constraint any attempt to expand NATO's missions in the near future. A stabilization force for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict or an involvement in post-election Iraq seems therefore very unlikely. More broadly, NATO is not the ideal organization to tackle the new threats of international terrorism and WMD proliferation. Because it is military by nature, it is not well suited to address security challenges that require judicial, police and civil cooperation. NATO has dramatically transformed itself from a collective defence organization to an enlarged collective security. Yet, current issues demand political efforts rather than military ones. (NATO Secretary general de Hoop Scheffer knows this and tries to refocus the Alliance in this direction). Yet, politically, NATO will not become the cleaning lady for military operations decided in Washington. Moreover, some member states will refuse any NATO involvement in what they regard as a national or European Union area of interests. The rather sad Darfour imbroglio of last summer will continue. Even the proposal for a NRF 7 exercise in Mauritania was opposed. The ghost of Tervueren and the very enlargement of NATO have decreased the level of trust among members to an all-time low. This is not sustainable in the long term.

The European Union seems to have different priorities. The first one will be Bosnia where Althea under Berlin-Plus will represent the bulk of EU efforts. The second is Africa where the Union intends to build on its Artemis operation in Congo. There the framework seems clear enough at least on paper. The Battle-Groups concept (13 for 2007) was endorsed by the Union for a "quick-in, quick out" capability to restore order. In the second stage, African peace-keepers are supposed to take on. This strategy of quick-fixing and devolution is however difficult to put in practice, all the more so because adequate capabilities are lacking and because the consensus in Europe for an African role is in fact limited. Despite all EU efforts to emphasize autonomy, NATO will remain an essential component for European crises-management and peace-keeping missions. For reasons linked to credibility on the ground, operational tasks and capabilities, a real capacity for 'autonomous action' (in the Saint-Malo sense) is premature. For now, the Union is just able to fulfil the low range of Petersberg tasks. For any serious operation in a hostile environment, the Union cannot act. So as far as EU-NATO relationships are concerned, the current Berlin Plus agreement will remain the main framework of cooperation.⁵ This may be not the political wish of some members, but this is the 'capabilities' reality.

⁵ Following the Summit between Luxembourg, Belgium, France and Germany mentioned earlier, an agreement was reached in November 2003, that was then officially endorsed by the European Council in December 15 2003. According to the new proposal, a small EU cell is being established at SHAPE to improve the preparation of EU operations having recourse to NATO assets under the 'Berlin-plus' arrangements. At the same time, NATO liaison arrangements with the EUMS will be defined to ensure transparency between the EU and NATO. Moreover, another

Boots on the ground

Capabilities in Europe AND in the United States are lacking. The situation in Europe is well known. Out of 1,6 million men under arms, only 03% are in effect usable. The first urgency is forces transformation. It means first conversion from conscription to professional army, and second adopting network centric warfare techniques that until now have been introduced only in Sweden, Great Britain, and in France. In any hostile environment, the risks of casualties remain too high. The Union must enhance the modernization of its capabilities in order to fight according to criteria demanded by modern democracies. At a minimum, effective C4ISR, i.e. command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance, is an absolute requirement. To achieve this goal, incentives must be put in place for member states that will not dramatically increase their defense budget. To this end, a European fund could be envisaged in relation to the future Defence Agency. In the same vein, research and development activities must be better funded and coordinated. Common procurement and common programs in developing and maintaining capabilities could lead to rapid benefits. In short, the Union has to spend better.

The second priority is deployability. At Helsinki in December 1999, the Union has defined its Headline Goal objectives. The aim was to put at the Union's disposal forces capable of carrying out all the Petersberg missions, including the most demanding, in operations up to army corps level, i.e. 50 to 60,000 troops. This target, framed after the Bosnian precedent, was supposed to be met at the end of 2003. It was not. A more flexible Headline Goal 2010 is now endorsed.⁶ Most importantly, severe shortfalls remain: strategic transport, air-to-air refueling, air ground surveillance, all weather strategic theater surveillance capabilities, combat search and rescue, electronic intelligence and precision guided munitions. The ECAP, launched in October 2001, recognized this necessity. The current NRF process is also supposed to help this transformation. Its support among Europeans demonstrates that this current revolution in warfare cannot be missed. (I will develop more in the final paper)

Clearly, technology *per se* is not an end in itself, but network enabled capabilities could provide more flexibility and effectiveness, by enhancing soldiers' protection and decreasing the risks of collateral damage. Moreover, without them, it would become nearly impossible to work with the US in any war-fighting operations. Yet, what is crucially needed is the capacity to deliver on time and in place boots on the ground. The biggest constraint and the crucial factor behind transatlantic tensions is in fact a very limited capacity to forces generation. I would argue that the same does apply to the United States. The Rumsfeld plan to have a light, highly mobile and technologically advanced US army has showed its limits in Iraq but also in Afghanistan. The current reform addresses this crucial deficiency: from current 28 infantry brigades, the US is now planning 43. In Kosovo, all US personnel are from the Reserve, in Afghanistan, troops rotation will come entirely from Europe.

cell with civil-military components will be established within the EUMS in order to enhance the capacity of the latter to conduct early warning, situation assessment and strategic planning. In the current circumstances, this cell is unable to conduct military operations.

⁶ The battle-groups (1500 troops) concept was agreed at the meeting between the Big Three in February 2004 and endorsed by the Union in its 22 November Capabilities Commitment Meeting. This underlines the current focus on deployability and rapidity, one of the key aspects of Operation Artemis.

Call for Pragmatism

The current international reality in contemporary world politics can be described as unipolarity without impunity. Washington may have the control of the commons, as Barry Posen has argued, but it remains highly vulnerable to asymmetric warfare, terrorism and counter-insurgency. In world economics, the supremacy of the US is far less clear with a dollar at an all time low and a public deficit that is unsustainable in the long term. The key question of course is the exercise of this unipolar power. As David Ignatius has coined it, the choice is between a foreign policy *à la* Ptolemy where the United States sees itself as the fixed centre of the universe, with other nations and events revolving around Washington and a foreign policy *à la* Copernicus where Washington understands that however powerful and important the United States may be, there are other nations, travelling in their own orbits, with their own cultures, traditions and values which must be taken into account. This seems to be the essence of Bush's inaugural message for its second term.

Depending on events in Iraq, three basic scenarios are possible. First, the status quo plus option whereby the US will continue its current estranged unipolarity, entertaining the illusion of reshaping alone the current international system. Second, the selective multilateralist option: Washington will continue to rely on coalition of the willing and its cherry-picking option in Europe. It is up to Europe to present a united position, which is the only to avoid this Europe *à la carte*. Third, the isolationist option: Washington, taking stock of its failure to redraw the map in the Middle East, will focus on the defense of the Western hemisphere and homeland security. This scenario is unlikely, yet the heartland constituency of the Bush II administration may be seduced by such an option. This is the other face of the Wilsonian coin: being exceptional, the US tends to retreat from world responsibilities. This represents the worst scenario, a reminiscence of the 1930s, where the US is engaged in world economics, not in world politics, and where Europe is too weak to really matter.

In all these three scenarios, the point for Europe is that its geopolitical and strategic responsibilities should grow. This conclusion was already emphasized in the Solana document. Whatever happens in the US, it seems evident that strategic responsibilities for Europe will increase. This does not mean opposition to the US, but it does mean an increased dialogue among Europeans on their common strategic interests. As Martin Wolf wrote recently in the *Financial Times*, "Europe must grow up and Europeans need to have foreign policies of their own". The local balance of power/status in Europe cannot blind Europe to the requirement of the global balance of power.

One has thus to recognize the changing nature of NATO. Compare to the 1990s, it seems that transatlantic relations have lost their specificity. Transatlantic affairs have radically changed in the sense that they mirror agreements and disagreements about the world order rather than expressing mutual interests. This is specially the case with NATO. It took ten years to transform the Alliance from collective defence to collective security. Unity was a necessity in the first framework, a condition for action in the second. Some scholars like Kissinger may regret the loss of this special partnership, but precisely because NATO went global, agreements about world order, not only regarding a specific threat or a particular crisis, are a necessary precondition for the functioning of the Alliance. Since global politics determines the level of the transatlantic partnership, there is an urgent necessity to assess commonalities and differences regarding global issues. It seems evident that the US and Europe cannot agree on everything everywhere,

precisely because the determinants are no longer limited to a specific problem. If it is unrealistic to expect complete agreement, it is also unrealistic to refuse common actions because of disagreements on a specific issue. Where the former do exist, the latter cannot become an obstacle for common efforts. In short, between the US and Europe we must learn how to disagree.

In turn, in Europe, we must learn how to agree. The voice of Europe is too often than not diluted in a multiplicity of national diplomatic solos that seem cacophonous if not inconsistent. This is particularly the case when the Union has to engage Washington, because every European member, small or large, wants to cultivate its own special relationship with the United States. The coordination of the diplomatic services of EU members as well as the reinforcement of the EU representation in Washington would dramatically enhance the influence of Europe, provided of course that the administration is also ready and willing to engage and to listen. But by its very nature, the Union will remain for the foreseeable future a very peculiar strategic actor who ultimately has to delegate the decision to use force to national government.⁷ This specific constraint means that a security strategy will first of all remain a mirror of the lowest common denominator among member states with different strategic outlooks.

Finally, a strategic dialogue with Washington is urgently needed: the current framework of the NAC-PSC meeting is totally inadequate. What is needed is a US-EU common agenda and framework of common actions. Iran and the Middle East peace process are the first two obvious priorities. A strategic assessment of European security needs and risks is thus urgent. Broadly defined, the dangers and opportunities for Europe in the next four years are mostly the same as those of the United States: How to stop Iran and others from going nuclear, how to stabilize the Middle East, how to integrate China, how to spread democracy? Again, these questions received the beginning of an answer in the Solana document. The election of G.W. Bush should deepen these strategic debates in Europe.

⁷ As noted by Fr. Heisbourg, "The EU cannot have a proper security strategy as long as decisions on the use of force rest in the hands of its member governments". Heisbourg François, "The 'European Security Strategy' is not a security strategy", in Everts Steven and al., *A European Way of War*, Center for European Reform, 2004, p. 28.