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**INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM, NON PROLIFERATION  
AND CRISIS MANAGEMENT: HOW DOES THE  
TRANSATLANTIC PARTNERSHIP WORK?**

*by Yves Boyer*

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# INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM, NON PROLIFERATION AND CRISIS MANAGEMENT: HOW DOES THE TRANSATLANTIC PARTNERSHIP WORK?

by Yves Boyer

As principles are concerned, transatlantic cooperation for combating terrorism or proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and crisis management activities is exemplary. A wide consensus exists throughout the Atlantic alliance and within the EU to maintain and strengthen the various regimes prohibiting the spread of WMD. Combating terrorism is equally unanimously understood as a priority for western government albeit, with some nuance about the nature and the intensity of the struggle. The US is embarked in a Global War on Terror when terrorism and weapons of mass destruction are mentioned in the European Union's Security Strategy paper as "preoccupying factors"<sup>1</sup>.

The intrinsic nature of terrorism and the complex stake surrounding non-proliferation makes difficult to systematically link both issues in a unique framework defining a global transatlantic partnership. Each issue requires specific policies and a huge variety of means and networks of cooperation that exceed, by far, what NATO can deliver as a traditional alliance. Indeed, the world scene is rapidly changing. Instruments against proliferation appear already somewhat outdated, leading some analysts to assume that in the near future *'the sensible campaign to combat further proliferation must fail. If we are fortunate it will fail slowly'*<sup>2</sup>. Fighting terrorism is largely a matter of police and intelligence which imperatives go far beyond what the transatlantic partnership can offer in a globalized world.

Indeed, globalization is bringing the biggest challenge to transatlantic relations. Without the cement of a common enemy, WMD and terrorism cannot make up for that fortunate loss. Between Washington and few, or all, West Europeans capitals, frictions resulting from political, societal, economic, trade or monetary divergences are more frequent than it used to be in the past decade. Indeed, at a time when temptation arouse in the US to use Nato as a "multipurpose kind of tool" whose missions should now encompass a growing number of many different tasks from fighting terrorism to promote stability "out of area", one runs the risk of overloading the boat precisely because different political perspectives among member states have spill-over altering the strength of the Alliance. If the phenomenon is not new, now its consequences produce direct effects on the fabric of the partnership.

## **Transformations of the international scene**

It is convenient if not comfortable to continue envisaging the world which is coming as the world which is already past. It is, thus, reassuring to postulate, without the slightest doubt, that already *"NATO has responded effectively to twenty-first security challenges"*<sup>3</sup>. Instruments that were inspired and defined in the framework of a given political and

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<sup>1</sup> « A secure Europe in a Better World », June 2003.

<sup>2</sup> "Future Warfare. Or the Triumph of History", Colin Gray, *RUSI Journal*, October 2005.

<sup>3</sup> "Collective Defence in the 21<sup>st</sup> century", General Richard Myers, *RUSI Journal*, October 2005.

strategical context, forty years ago, are expected to live indefinitely<sup>4</sup>. How relevant if, not outdated, would they be in the next decades? A multipolar world is appearing where new “actors” are transforming the scene and the parameters of the play. In that perspective, one cannot underestimate the fact that Western values and interests underpinning globalization and its correlative imperative of stability will certainly be dramatically challenged. Indeed, the benefit of globalization is the privilege of around only one billion of people when four are at the margin of the market economy and one other billion is totally out of the game. Already, half of the world population lives in only six Asian countries with high demographic growth. Three have now nuclear arsenal. Two of them having superbly ignored the NPT from which they are still not part - giving them a strange status since they are not considered as nuclear states according to the NPT - , a third one has been a late signatory of the treaty.

In such transformed world, one of the crucial difficulties that have to be transcended between America and the EU is related to diverse if not divergent cultural influences that now shape their respective vision of the world: if values are shared, norms are no longer systematically coinciding. As such those differences if they are not yet bearing upon the political as well as the bureaucratic *raison d'être* of the transatlantic partnership, they however growingly contribute to lessen its ability to generate common political actions. Common grids of lecture are increasingly lacking between the two sides of the Atlantic for analyzing rapid and complex international transformations, either to understand their origin or to envisage their potential political and strategical consequences as well as their possible solutions. It is particularly significant, by example, in the relation with the Arab Muslim world.

Most Arab-Muslim countries are under severe strain. Demographic pressures, economic underdevelopment, exclusion from world economic exchanges, dramatic unemployment rate could be actively exploited by Islamic fundamentalists. There is indeed a very dangerous explosive cocktail that may lead to unbridled rise of radical Islam with dramatic political consequences on the stability of that region and on Western security. The Western world has thus now to cope with the revival of Islam. Either, an increased uneasiness from Arab Muslim population may impact on European security or, because, in its extreme form, adepts of a radical Islam pursue goals which are uncompromisingly at odds with Western values. If the transatlantic partnership remains useful to meet such challenges it does not appear to be able to fit the tasks in finding constructive and positive answers.

To prevent worst case scenarios the European Union is trying to exert a stabilizing effect on the Arab Muslim world in order to buy time in the hope that the present chaotic situation may be sooner than later been improved. In its Mediterranean policy the EU is having expressed an implicit reluctance to see an excessive American involvement. The current messy situation in Iraq is reinforcing that feeling as stated by French defence Minister, Michèle Alliot-Marie: *‘we have a different sensibility vis-à-vis the Arab-Muslim world, whereas the Americans are intent on resolutely facing the new challenges to security, especially after 9/11... we should be listening more to the Arab-Muslim world: the sense of injustice and humiliation is really very widespread. It is being used by terrorist networks. So it's up to us to show consideration for its*

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<sup>4</sup> It has been the case of the NPT which was indefinitely prolonged as in 1995 at the NPT Review and Extension conference.

*civilization which is very old; understanding for its problems which are very real; determination to resolve collectively the Israel-Arab conflict; and resolve to help the Arab world enter modernity. We must help moderate Muslims counter the rise in a radical Islam which has come about through the bankruptcy of many states and the exploitation that's been made of this by power-hungry fanatics. That is our common responsibility to meet together, but each with our own cards as this is a complex and sensitive problem*<sup>5</sup>. It would be too easy and a mistake to attribute such attitude to any kind of anti-Americanism. It is related to historical experience of the Europeans about the real complexities in dealing with what general de Gaulle used to call "l'Orient compliqué" (the intricate Eastern).

In the early 90's the European Union redefined its Mediterranean policy around three goals: political stability and security; financial and economic developments; social, cultural and human collaboration. This led to the Barcelona process between the EU and the Southern shores of the Mediterranean basin. The difficult walk toward modernity in the Maghreb and the Mashrak (i.e the North African littoral from Morocco to Egypt) has turned this area in a high risk zone. Current stability is very fragile and largely dependent upon the existence of authoritarian regime implicitly backed by western powers despite their commitment in favour of human rights. To choose the lesser of two evils is indeed derogatory to principles. The other alternative is running the risk of letting Islamic fundamentalism regime becoming a political reality and spreading from Morocco to Egypt with the associated danger of dramatic turbulence in the whole Mediterranean basin.

In a way, as already mentioned, European powers are buying time, notably through developing comprehensive programs of cooperation and development such as the common EU strategy in the Mediterranean. This is done in the hope that financial efforts, cooperation will stabilize socially and then politically the countries of the south of the Mediterranean basin. The road towards that goal is paved with many uncertainties. Widespread corruption, growing pauperization, demographic watershed, illiteracy, in the Maghreb-Mashrak "help" Islamic movements which find there a very favourable ground for prospering. They brought refuge for those who felt excluded and impoverished by what is perceived as consequences of Western move towards globalization. They found, in Islam a sense of dignity a sense to their life. The greatest paradoxes of that situation is that, if on one hand Europe's search for stability is translated into backing authoritarian regime, the White House's "Greater Middle-East Initiative" is actively promoting democracy in that region. Democracy is growingly perceived as being corresponding to Western values and intrinsically not compatible with the precepts of Islam. Speaking after a recent Middle East summit in Bahrain when a "democratic manifesto" initiated by Washington was rejected, Jack Straw, the British Foreign Affairs declared that: *"It would be a disaster if this region thought democracy was an American idea"*<sup>6</sup>. Such sentence is reminiscent of what was said, few years ago at the Wehrkünde meeting in Munich by Wolfgang Ischinger, then the German ambassador to Washington: *"unfortunately, the standing of the United States has not improved worldwide, it has deteriorated...there are people who would even go as far as*

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<sup>5</sup> Michèle Alliot-Marie, "Renewing the Transatlantic Partnership", speech at the CSIS, Washington, January 16, 2004

<sup>6</sup> « Bush's vision fails to win over Middle East », Simon Tisdall, *The Guardian*, November 15, 2005.

to suggest that the poor standing of the US could be a burden in effort to solve regional problems”<sup>7</sup>.

If the organization of delicate relations with the Arab Muslim world does not call for making the transatlantic partnership the key actor, the rapid transformation in the overall balance of power will also affect the efficiency of that partnership. In the next ten to twenty years, a rapid demographic decline in most EU's countries will reduce the overall reach of the European powers at a time when a relative decrease of US capabilities will diminish in due proportion its leadership role on world affairs. Such new settings may accelerate the relative irrelevance of large part of present international mechanism of regulation largely initiated by Western powers such as those prohibiting the spread of WMD. Arms control regime used to constrain the spread of weapons or technologies considered as threatening regional equilibrium are increasingly unable to produce effects when at the same time there are temptations by Western countries (however the greatest proliferators of WMD) to transform the arms control process into a political instrument of power. Non proliferation is becoming as much an end as a mean to coerce, a mean to influence a given political situation as witnessed with the disastrous developments occurring during the Iraqi crisis in 2002/2003. As such it is running the risk of being seen with growing suspicion by new world or regional powers challenging the present status quo established in favour of the Western powers.

In the mean time, if the transatlantic partnership can undoubtedly continue to play a useful, although potentially reduced role one should neither overestimate its relevance nor its capacity to overcome internal contradictions when global issues are at stake. When terrorism took a world-wide proportion with the 9/11 attacks against New York and Washington, the transatlantic solidarity worked very well and as the French newspaper *Le Monde* published, the day after the attack, at its front page ‘*Nous sommes tous américains*’. The partnership however stop functioning, as expected, when the US government did not call for activating article 5 of the Washington treaty leaving European allies making bilateral arrangements with Washington in order to participate to the on-going fight in Afghanistan aimed at wiping out the Taliban who provided a safe heaven to Al Qaeda<sup>8</sup>. Different strategic perspectives are indeed plunging the Western world into a delicate situation which may create profound dividing line between its different parts. The current difficulties in the transatlantic relationship are precisely illustrating diverse if not divergent cultural influence that create different visions of the world between the US and Europe. In that perspective, the many debates surrounding the Doha round within the framework of the WTO are reflecting deep different strategic perspectives. It is significant that some EU's countries having their economy largely founded on international trade follow a certain path regarding their security requirements when others, more preoccupied with maintaining a certain social model less open to unbridled economic liberalism have chosen different strategic perspective.

## **Fighting terrorism**

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<sup>7</sup> “Don't mention the war”, Peter Spiegel, *Financial Times*, February 9, 2004.

<sup>8</sup> France was one of the first European country to participate to Operation Enduring Freedom with a carrier battle group (operation Héraclès).

Fighting terrorism is a tricky issue and remains largely marked by secrecy making analysis an almost impossible task to grapple with. This is a matter of high confidentiality in a scene where shadows matter as much as light. People involved in that business will certainly not expose to the open the nature, the purpose, the scope, the channels and the depth of their cooperation. To such opacity, one has to add the very nature of what is at stake. It is about using the means offered by international cooperation for exchanging very sensitive information and acting in order to identify, deter, prevent and act against terrorism. The new nature of the threat has had many consequences to begin with blurring traditional patterns of cooperation organized in concentric circles.

The first one is the national level. At that level, a huge diversity of situations exists. National organisation varies according to historical experience, administrative structure and political architecture. Organisations range from centralized structure to more decentralised which gives local power (*Länder*, States, regions etc.) a certain capacity to mobilise police resources against terrorists activities. Despite these differences, a common set of problems have to be internally solved to make efficient and mutually fruitful intelligence cooperation at the international level. Besides traditional national inter-service rivalries, one key issue is about giving coherence of the intelligence processes at the national level. Traditional police forces, *gendarmerie* (in certain countries) and customs agents interact with many other agencies such as the counter-intelligence apparatus (the Federal Bureau of Investigation in the US; DST, *Direction de la Surveillance du Territoire* and *Renseignements Généraux* in France; MI5 in Britain, and the BND *Bundesnachrichtendienst* etc.). There are obvious difficulties to synchronize and pool efficiently intelligence products among those many different services which have their own history, code and behaviour. In order to enhance the whole effectiveness the need arose to create new bodies with the tasks of coordinating the many effort done at the national level in fighting terrorism. In France by exemple, the Cilat (*Comité interministériel de lutte antiterroriste*), an inter-ministerial structure, chaired by the Interior minister is coordinating the works of other ministries regarding protection against terrorists activities ; the UCLAT (*unité de coordination de la lutte anti-terroriste*) has been created in 1984 to coordinate and spread intelligence information among specialised services. UCLAT has liaison officers in Germany, UK, Italy, Spain, Belgium, Holland and the USA. In Britain, a structure in charge of synthesizing intelligence materials about terrorist activities for political leaders does also exist, the JTAC (Joint Terrorism Analysis Center); at the Home office level, terror activities are coordinated by the Counter-Terrorism and Intelligence Directorate (CTID). Under the leadership of the Director General of the MI5, the JTAC comprises representatives from eleven government departments and agencies.

The second level of cooperation against terrorism is the European and the allies level and certainly not the transatlantic partnership as such. At the level of the EU the recognition of the need to deepen cooperation to fight terrorism has been the result of the trans-borders activities of terrorist cells. As early as in 1975, the European Council decided to organise an internal security group called Trevi (Terrorism Radicalism, Extremism, Violence, and Internationalism). The TREVI group was set up, at that time, among the 9 EEC members to deepen police cooperation notably in relation with extremism, radicalism and terrorism at that time identified with the *Rote armee fraction* in the FRG, Red brigades in Italy and *Action Directe* in France. 9/11 has considerably

modified the EU perspective in fighting terrorism with the adoption on September 21, 2001, of a Plan of Action to Combat Terrorism encompassing legislative measures, the strengthening of operational cooperation among security services, police and customs, the improvement of the effectiveness of information systems with new functions added to the Schengen Information System (SIS).

- *Europol* has thus seen its anti-terrorist activities significantly increased with the establishment of a Counter-terrorist task force
- A European Arrest Warrant has been agreed even though only 17 out of the 25 members had included this European Arrest Warrant in their national law by June 2004.
- A new structure, Eurojust has been created in order to develop judiciary co-operation within the EU.
- Cooperation agreements have been signed with the US such as by example in April 2004 the agreement to strengthen maritime container security.
- The High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) is able to use the Situation Center (SitCent) to provide synthesis of intelligence materials (provided by the member states) to the EU presidency and to the various member states. Although the role of SitCent should not be over estimated. It receives rough analysis from other sources of intelligence. As example, Europol is not allowed to give personal related data but only broad strategic analysis<sup>9</sup>. In the same perspective exchange of sensitive information are still made on a bilateral basis within the EU member states and only between key actors in Germany, France, the UK and few others countries members of the Union.
- This arsenal of measures was improved after the Madrid bomb attack in March of this year. At the EU council of last June a “EU Plan of Action on Combating Terrorism” has been endorsed in accordance with UNSC resolution 1372 of 2001 which established the Counter-Terrorism Committee, made up of all 15 members of the Security Council.
- Surveillance of ground borders of the Union (6 000 km) or its maritime borders (85 000 km), a European Borders Agency was set up in January 2005.
- The position of a Counter-terrorism Coordinator, Gert de Vries, has been established to co-ordinate the work of the Council in combating terrorism.

Among allies the transatlantic partnership is not directly involved in the direct fight against terrorism. Outside an EU or a Nato framework, one has to mention the elusive role of the so-called “Alliance Base”<sup>10</sup>. A network of intelligence services working together on matters related to terrorism and having their “secretariat” located in Paris. The members of “Alliance Base” are similar to those participating to the MIC, Multinational Interoperability Council. The MIC is a kind of a “reinforced cooperation” in military affairs established between the US, France, Britain, Germany, Australia, Canada and Italy, since 2005.

The third level in the fight against terrorism is a world-wide cooperation. This type of cooperation is made more and more on an ad hoc basis and essentially bi-lateral. Even

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<sup>9</sup> Interview of Max-Peter, Europol Director, *Jane's Intelligence Review*, November 2005.

<sup>10</sup> « La CIA et la DGSE auraient établi une structure secrète antiterroriste », *Le Monde*, July 4, 2005 ;  
« Help From France Key In Covert Operations. Paris's 'Alliance Base' Targets Terrorists », Dana Priest, *Washington Post* July 3, 2005.

countries with political divergences may be led to exchange pertinent intelligence information and develop cooperation. For example, during its visit to London in the fall of 2005, Vladimir Putin was accompanied by Anatoli Safonov, special envoy of the Russian president for international co-operation against terrorism. The Russians discussed intensively anti-terrorism with their British counterparts and a working group on that matter between the two governments will be developed. More generally one is witnessing the multiplication of bilateral or multilateral contacts among security and intelligence services throughout the world. This sort of gathering now encompasses meeting between many different internal security services. By example in October 2005, the head of the Japanese Public Service Investigation Agency (KOANCHO), Takashi Oizumi visited his French counterpart at the DST. Discussions now encompass not only terrorism but also organized crime which represent a growing challenge for many states, its is costing around £14 billions to the UK economy<sup>11</sup>. International meeting are also places where countries at odds on many topic still gathered to talk about international terrorism. Such meetings occurred, at least openly, twice in 2005. In February in Saudi Arabia, among many participants, were the head of the Pakistan's intelligence service (SIS), Britain's MI5 head Dame Eliza Manningham, the head of French's UCLAT, president Putin's special envoy on terrorism Anatoli Savonov and president George Bush advisor on homeland security, Frances Townsend. Few weeks later in Novosibirsk such gathering also happened in March where many heads or representative of services committed to fight terrorism from the EU, Nato, G8, the CIS, etc gathered once more time.

The global fight against terrorism thus call for new ad hoc cooperation sometimes far away from the traditional channels inherited from the cold war.

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<sup>11</sup> «Warning over 'mafias' gangs infiltrating British banks», Patrick Hosking et Stewart Tandler, *The Times*, November 16, 2005.