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Foreign Policy in Dialogue

**A Quarterly Newsletter on German and European Foreign
Policy**

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and Sebastian Harnisch*

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About the Project Deutsche-Aussenpolitik.De

The internet project on German foreign policy was established in 1998 at the Chair for International Relations and Foreign Policy at the University of Trier and was funded until September 2008 by the ASKO EUROPA-FOUNDATION.

In October 2008 the platform as such was closed. All contents which had been produced at this time is still available at: <http://www.deutsche-aussenpolitik.de>. Moreover, the weekly press digest "Foreign Policy in Focus" and the Online-Archive remain operational and are still regularly up-dated.

Until 2008, the project was headed by Marco Overhaus. Staff members were Jan Martin Vogel, Milena Anna Jurca, Peter Klassmann, Benjamin Koltermann and Christine Schuster.

Overall responsibility for the project was with Prof. Hanns W. Maull.

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Will the Pendulum Swing Back? Transatlantic Relations at the End of the Bush Administration

Editorial

By Marco Overhaus

Presidential elections in the U.S. always produce a high degree of public interest in Europe and around the world – in this the forthcoming elections in November are no exception. What is different this time around, though, is that the vote seems to be overloaded with hope and expectations. Analytically it is often argued that the transatlantic relationship hit rock bottom under the presidency of George W. Bush and can only improve under any new American president. Normatively a strong desire can be felt in Europe to put the relationship back on track and to re-establish the traditional ties based on common interests and values.

It is impossible to predict at this point to what extent these high expectations will be fulfilled. Given the short temporal distance it is even very difficult to assess the transatlantic relationship during the tenure of the Bush administration from 2001 to the end of 2008. Moreover, if one takes the American elections as the crucial bench mark one risks the fallacy of blaming everything that went wrong on a specific administration in Washington.

Having in mind these problems, the forthcoming U.S. presidential elections still offer a good opportunity to take stock of the transatlantic relationship which has without any doubt experienced a difficult time during the past eight years. It is important to ask how this relationship evolved in the political, security and economic area. As “Europe” does not exist as a bloc it is also important to take into account different national perspectives within the EU. Also, the question has to be raised how important the “Bush factor,” which is related to a specific administration, is in comparison to other – structural and longer-term – factors. Such an analysis may yield a more realistic assessment of the opportunities and limitations of transatlantic cooperation under the next administration in Washington.

The authors of this final issue of “Foreign Policy in Dialogue” deal with these questions from different angles. In his introductory contribution, *Hanns W. Maull* addresses what he sees as common assumptions in the academic debate, namely that the race for the American presidency is close and that the outcome’s significance is rather limited as foreign policy

continuity will prevail along those lines which had already been established by the Clinton and Bush senior administrations after the Cold War. Contrary to these assumptions, Maull predicts that Obama will win the race by a landslide reflecting a dominant mood for change in American politics which will ultimately affect foreign policy as well. Concerning the longer-term factors, Maull identifies different conceptions of multilateralism as an important challenge for transatlantic co-operation. He points to the recent crisis with Russia over Georgia as a proof that “effective multilateralism” finally needs to be put into practice.

Marco Overhaus analyses the security policy dimension of transatlantic relations within the institutional setting of NATO. Starting from the transatlantic crisis before and during the Iraq war in 2003 he identifies two factors, which, in his view, have the potential to contribute to the recovery of the European-American relationship and specifically to strengthen security co-operation across the Atlantic. Firstly, the very divisive post-9/11 agenda of the “War on Terrorism” since 2005 has been partly replaced by the more consensual state-building agenda. Secondly, the deterioration of the relationship between Russia and the West offers the chance for closer co-operation among European Allies and the U.S. Overhaus warns, however, that both factors contain considerable risks, such as failure in Afghanistan or the re-establishment of a permanent east-west confrontation in Europe.

Stormy Mildner takes a closer look at the economic dimension of transatlantic relations during the presidency of George W. Bush. On the one side, she identifies a certain robustness of transatlantic economic co-operation for two reasons. Firstly, the political disputes across the Atlantic during the past few years did not have “any significant impact on the volume of transatlantic trade and investment flows.” Secondly, despite the fact that some of America’s trade has shifted towards the Asian markets, the U.S. and the EU still remain each other’s most important trading partners. Despite this robustness, the relationship also faces serious longer-term challenges, which are not directly related to the Bush administration. These challenges concern very different regulatory systems and philosophies as well as sensibilities on both sides of the Atlantic when national security concerns or industrial interests are affected (such as in the Boeing vs. Airbus case).

The other four contributions to this volume explore the transatlantic relationship from bilateral perspectives. *Patrick Keller* looks at how German policy-makers and the wider public have seen the Bush administration and detects, as is the case in other countries, widespread expectations that the forthcoming U.S. elections will bring a wake-up from the

“nightmare of the Bush years.” The author deplors this general mood as normatively presumptuous and as analytically misleading. In his view, it is presumptuous because it negates that the Bush administration, including its neoconservative elements, is part of the democratic West. It is misleading because the recent irritations and disputes across the Atlantic have not rooted in a specific government but rather in longer-term, structural factors. Keller’s main point, however, is a positive one when he enumerates five factors, which are likely to contribute to the recreation of the transatlantic partnership. Among these factors is the devaluation of extreme foreign policy views in both America and Europe after the Iraq war.

Daniela Schwarzer analyses the French foreign and security policy in the transatlantic context. Here, the change of the presidency in France seems to be more interesting than the coming change in the White House. Since President Nicolas Sarkozy took office in 2007 he has pursued a more “occidental atlanticist” foreign policy course than his predecessors. Moreover, he announced to profoundly alter his country’s relationship with NATO. Regardless of these changes, Schwarzer concludes that French foreign and security policy has in fact displayed continuity rather than change: the overarching quest for Paris remains to create a multi-polar world order in which Europe is a capable actor. Nonetheless, the author detects a change in the underlying French rationale. Rather than “counter-balancing the hegemon” it is now to fill an emerging gap, which is created by the shift of American interests away from Europe.

The relationship of the United Kingdom to the U.S. has always been called “special” on both sides of the Atlantic. In his contribution, *Christopher Coker* points out that both countries’ perspectives on this “special relationship” have not been identical, however. While the British have always seen the relationship in historical terms, the Americans have been far more pragmatic in the sense that the “usefulness” of partners in world affairs matters. Against this background, Coker sees the “special relationship” under pressure from two sides. Firstly, the aftermath of the Iraq and Afghanistan interventions has demonstrated the depreciating value of Britain’s military power resources. Secondly, the author states that Washington in its “War on Terrorism” could no longer count on British public opinion. Increasingly, the British came to fear the “ethical strangers” created by this war within their own community and the extremism this might bring into their own country. For the future, Coker identifies and explains in more detail three options for British policy towards the transatlantic relationship: binding, bonding or balancing.

Since the disintegration of the Soviet Empire Poland has longed for a special relationship of its own with the U.S. As *Bartosz Wiśniewski* underlines, Poland's pro-American foreign and security policy outlook has long been supported by the political spectrum as well as the wider public. The author's central argument is that this favourable perspective has been called into question during the presidency of George W. Bush because Polish loyalty in Iraq and elsewhere did not lead to the same degree of tangible political and economic benefits as was hoped for by many Poles. According to Wiśniewski, Polish decision-makers have learnt some lessons from this experience. He sees the Polish objections and conditionalities with regard to the installation of America's missile defence shield as a sign of a coming recalibration of the Polish-U.S. relationship. This recalibration would match more modest Polish demands and expectations with a more realistic assessment in Washington of Poland's not so unconditional loyalty.

Across the contributions to this publication, three common themes stand out. The first is that most authors see the transatlantic relationship under the presidency of George W. Bush as exceptional in one way or another, even as they emphasize different factors and developments.

The past eight years have witnessed profound transatlantic incidents and developments in the political and security spheres as well as in the bilateral relationships – be it the Iraq crisis in 2003, the erosional tendencies in the special British-American relationship or the rise and fall of high Polish expectations. Much of this obviously has to do with the exceptional event of September 11, 2001 and subsequent European and American reactions to it. The economic area might be distinct in this context as Stormy Mildner underlines that the economic co-operation remained rather unaffected by the political developments. The second theme is that our authors somehow expect that the pendulum is about to swing back. This manifests itself, for instance, when Maull stresses the American “mood for change” and the fact that Washington has had to experience the limitations of its military power (and the need for international partners) or when Patrick Keller states that “extreme views have been discredited on both sides of the Atlantic.” Bartosz Wiśniewski's assessment of a recalibration of Polish-American relations, which brings in line mutual expectations and demands also points into this direction. Finally, most of our contributors agree that America's standing and public approval in Europe has eroded since 2001 (which is supported by international polls such as the annual Transatlantic Trends). The findings indicate that this trend has only begun

to change recently. Even if the specific outcome of the forthcoming U.S. presidential elections will not be the decisive factor for the future of transatlantic relations, as our authors seem to suggest, they surely offer the chance of re-energising the relationship on the political and on the societal level.

The Quest for Effective Multilateralism and the Future of Transatlantic Relations

By Hanns W. Maull

Much of the recent debates about the future of transatlantic relations after the U.S. presidential elections in November 2008 share two assumptions. First, the race is portrayed as very close: Barack Obama and John McCain, which are indeed running neck to neck in opinion polls, are given equal consideration when speculation turns to the likely foreign policy course of the next president. Second, this is not thought to matter terribly much as foreign policy is deemed likely to continue along well-established lines – that is to say roughly along the lines of the previous Democratic administration of Bill Clinton if Obama wins, and along those of the George Bush senior's Republican administration which so successfully ended the Cold War should John McCain prevail – admittedly, with perhaps a greater margin of divergence for the latter.

American Politics: In the Mood for Change?

I beg to differ with both assumptions. First, to me much seems to point towards a convincing victory of Obama but very little the way of a President John McCain. Now, with financial markets in turmoil and not only the U.S., but also the world economy, in deep trouble, with support for the incumbent president at record lows and a clear mood for change among the electorate, it would be truly surprising if American voters decided to hand power once more to the party which caused much of the present economic malaise and political mess. But contrary to what most experts seem to assume, the direction and strategic orientations of American foreign policy is wide open. To be sure, Obama has surrounded himself with a team of foreign policy advisers who represent the best and the brightest of the Democratic foreign policy establishment in Washington, and many in that team gained first-hand experience in foreign policy-making in the Clinton administration. Since Obama himself does not have much experience in foreign affairs, it seems reasonable to assume that these policies will be shaped by his team, and that this would lead to many familiar policy features. Nor do the rather few foreign policy contributions by Obama to the campaign suggest otherwise.

But even in normal circumstances, let alone in a world in turmoil, anyone assuming that the foreign policy strategy of the next administration would build on positions and blueprints prepared during the campaign is bound to be disappointed. Two important arguments always have to be weighed against the conventional wisdom of foreign policy continuity. First, while

the present administration already is a “lame duck”, the next one will be a “fledgling duck” for at least six months, if not more. World affairs will not come to a halt to accommodate the formation of a new American administration, and are likely to throw up what British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan, once asked by a young journalist about what had troubled him most in his distinguished political career, identified as “events, my dear boy, events!” Even if we assume fundamental continuity in U.S. foreign policy, there will be a hiatus of almost one year between this fall and the summer of 2009 in which American foreign policy will be all but incapacitated, and could therefore easily be derailed by events. As things stand now, developments in the international financial system and the world economy are likely to be turbulent during this critical period. As a result, American foreign policy may well find itself in a rather different world once it becomes fully operational again.

The second reason for being sceptical about continuity is that President Obama, if he is indeed, as I assume, elected by a landslide, will have been voted into office by a mood for change, which seems to dominate American politics at this stage. President Obama could then, in some sense, become a prisoner of his own incantation of new politics and policies. The dynamics of change seem likely to initially affect economics and domestic politics, rather than foreign relations. In fact, a certain shift of the centre of political gravity towards domestic affairs seems all but inevitable, anyway, although America would certainly neither wish nor be able to withdraw from international affairs. But should the desire for change prevail as the dominant political dynamic, this will eventually also reverberate in foreign policy.

American Power? American Impotence?

Linked to this shift of priorities towards domestic issues and the new dynamics of change in American society is a third reason for assuming that American politics may well be entering new territory: the disintegration of American power and influence in the world under the current president’s administration.¹ America’s position in international relations has been misunderstood, in America itself and elsewhere, for much of the 1990s. The “uni-polar moment” never existed in the sense of an overwhelming power advantage of the U.S. in international affairs; rather, the disintegration of the East-West conflict and of the Soviet empire resulted in a diffusion of power, America’s towering military superiority notwithstanding. This diffusion of power reflected the (often exponential!) growth in the

¹ For a telling assessment of the crisis of American leadership from a former senior Japanese diplomat, see: Tanaka, Hitoshi: *The Crisis of Global Governance and the Rise of East Asia*, *East Asia Insights* 3:4 (Sept. 2008), p. 3. This essay also illustrates so well the pervasive tendency to analyse changes in international relations in terms of shifts, rather than of an accumulation/diffusion, of power between states.

number of relevant actors and rapidly deepening interdependencies among them. This accentuated a problem that had already existed before, namely the asymmetry of power between what you might call “spoilers” versus “builders” of international order. “Builders” are actors, which are committed to the maintenance and development of international order (that is, the arrangements of global governance); the U.S. traditionally was, as Michael Mandelbaum rightly argues,² by far the most important of those “builders” since World War II. “Spoilers”, on the other hand, are those actors who are interested, for whatever reasons, in blocking others from achieving their objectives, or even in creating destruction and havoc. Given the growing complexity of global interdependencies and the rapidly increasing destructive power and reach of modern technology, unhinging functioning divisions of labour, destabilising order or even causing havoc is comparatively easy to do. The proliferation of problems with state failure, but also the crises of international organisations, illustrates this well.

While the implications of this asymmetry between the influence of builders and of spoilers in international relations may still be insufficiently appreciated, they are at least widely recognized. This is not the case with another important distinction to make in any discussion of international order, namely that between what we might call “old” versus “new” builders. “Old” builders are those actors, which have traditionally been concerned with the maintenance and the development of *existing* arrangements of global governance; principal among them are the western industrialised democracies led by the U.S. “New” builders are countries like China, India and Brazil, but also new non-state actors such as corporations and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), which are naturally more inclined towards changing the status quo. While the tensions between those two groups are frequently discussed in terms of diverging norms and interests, (“old” builders are naturally inclined to try to defend the status quo and their related privileges, while “new” builders are assumed to push for their own, new rules to better reflect their own interests), the most important issue in fact may not be so much diverging norms and interests, but a serious shortage of effort and resources flowing into the maintenance of global governance. This is particularly visible in the case of China: the problem with integrating Beijing into the existing international order primarily seems to be the reluctance of China itself to assume the kind of role it would need to play to ensure a functioning international order.

² Mandelbaum, Michael (2005): *The Case for Goliath: How America Acts as the World’s Government in the Twenty-first Century*. New York.

But even with the old builders, we cannot be sure how much they really will care about the possible disintegration of the existing international order. The way the Doha round trade negotiations have been developing in recent years has not been encouraging from this perspective: not only the new heavyweights (such as Brazil, India and China), but also the U.S. and the EU have not shown the degree of political commitment and leadership necessary to move the negotiations forward towards a successful conclusion of the Doha round. The principal reason for this sorry state of affairs seems to be that neither in America nor in the EU have political leaders been strong and motivated enough to confront those vested interests (such as the farmers) which are opposed to significant adjustments to their present trade subsidies and privileges. In fact, political leaders in those countries often have been either too weak or too ill-informed themselves to refrain from exploiting anti-globalisation sentiments for domestic political gain.

Now, with the reverberations of international financial market turmoil about to hit the real world economy, the twin asymmetries between “builders” and “spoilors” and between “old” and “new builders” are likely to throw up, sooner rather than later, major crises and fundamental challenges to the present international order. If those challenges were dramatic enough, they would quickly put the one and only superpower and its next president on the spot. This could easily demonstrate that the emperor in fact was naked (or at least not dressed decently). Would America then find its allies and friends ready and willing to help? And if the crisis at hand and was less pressing, would either America or its allies even care to move? Might there be governments that would not prefer to wait for others, or for the crisis to dissolve itself, but take up the responsibility of leadership?

“Shared Norms and Values?”

At this point in the argument at the very latest, the transatlantic *commentariat* would protestingly invoke the “shared values” and “common interests” of the transatlantic community.³ Yes, of course: America and Europe are indeed united by shared values such as human rights, democracy and the rule of law, and their interests frequently coincide or overlap. Yet invoking shared values in the pursuit of foreign policy objectives in itself does not provide much of a basis for co-operation: quite apart from the fact that the values invoked may be defined quite differently by different parties, this approach also raises issues of

³ See, for example, the contributions from a distinguished group of lattices made up by both academics and practitioners in: Kronenberg, Volker / Puglierin, Jana / Kellner, Patrick (eds.) (2008): Außenpolitik und Staatsräson, Festschrift für Christian Hacke zum 65. Geburtstag, part III. Baden-Baden, p. 115-231.

credibility and commitment to those values, and real policy influence over others will presumably depend on proven credibility and seriousness of commitment. On both scores, Washington did not fare well under George W. Bush. But the EU and Germany also have their own problems with this. As for overlapping interests, the question is: will governments really recognize what is in the best interest in of their country, and will they act accordingly? Chancellor Gerhard Schröder may well have felt that “saying no” to the U.S. during the Iraq crisis was indeed in the best interests of Germany, but he presumably also saw his own the re-election in that light and, from this point of view, recognized the domestic political utility of this policy. George W. Bush presumably also assumed his own stance and that of his government on global warming and climate change to be in the national interest; whoever his successor will be is likely to define this interest differently. In short: neither shared values nor complementary interests will ensure effective transatlantic co-operation in the future. This co-operation will require the will to expend political and financial resources and the diplomatic skill to define and effectively implement common objectives and strategies against a background of habitual political and bureaucratic infighting, and of notorious difficulties in finding meaningful common positions and resolve to common action in Europe.

Two Takes on Effective Multilateralism

In this context, it is habits of and attitudes towards co-operation, rather than values and interests that are crucial. But those habits and attitudes are, in turn, also shaped by norms. The concept of “multilateralism” is critical in this context. Yet, as John van Oudenaren has pointed out,⁴ the European concept of multilateralism differs fundamentally from the traditional American approach, and this difference has become much more important since the end of the Cold War. ⁵ In a nutshell, the European approach towards multilateralism holds up the rule of law and institutions as core concepts of global governance. From this perspective, all actors, even the most powerful states, are expected to comply with international law and the decisions of international institutions. The threat and use of force would be handled strictly in accordance with international law, and resort to military force would be seen as exceptional. In European eyes, multilateralism is about law and institutions, about continuous co-operation and compromise, and about mutual accommodation, rather than about confrontation and sanctions.

4 Van Oudenaren, John (2005): Transatlantic Bipolarity and the End of Multilateralism. In: Political Studies Quarterly 120:1, p. 1-32.

5 Van Oudenaren, John: What is "Multilateral"? in: Policy Review, No.117 (Feb. 2003) (Internet version: http://www.policyreview.org/feb03/oudenaren_print.html) [25.3.03]

In other words, the EU clearly positions itself as a “transformationist” power: its aspiration is to transform the way international relations are conducted along the lines of politics within highly developed democratic market economies (such as most member states of the EU) but also of the politics between member states within the EU itself. According to its own thinking, the EU therefore represents itself as a model for international order in general which it tries to promote – a model of politics both within and between states which might be called “civilised.” Prolonged, deep democratisation, the expansion of the welfare state and the development of European integration in this view all have contributed to the “civilised” nature of intra- and inter-state politics: they have tamed the exercise of power, they have replaced might by right and the use or threat of force by judicial and political institutions as the principal means to manage conflicts.

Now, the EU wants to help civilise international relations in accordance with this model; in that sense, the EU aspires to be a “civilian power.” François Duchêne, who coined the term “civilian power,” saw the European Community as a major actor in a world more and more shifting towards “planetary interdependence” (today, we would call this “globalisation”), with the implied need and opportunity to “domesticate” international relations between states through developing “[...] a sense of common responsibility and structures of contractual politics which in the past have been associated almost exclusively with ‘home’ and not ‘foreign ...affairs’.”⁶

While official American views of international relations often also include a strong dose of transformationist ambition, U.S. foreign policy generally sees multilateralism as a tool of American foreign policy and as a way to achieve its objectives, rather than as the ultimate objective in its own right. Even a liberal internationalist such as Joseph S. Nye, who – as a distinguished International Relations scholar with a Chair in Harvard and a senior policy maker in numerous administrations – represents one of this school’s most powerful voices both in academia and in government. In an important essay in *The National Interest*⁷ he takes a revealingly instrumentalist view of multilateralism:

“Of course [...] not all multilateral arrangements are good or in the U.S. national interest, and the United States should employ unilateral tactics in certain situations.”

6 Duchêne, quoted in Linklater, Andrew (2005): A European Civilising Process? In: Hill, Christopher / Smith, Michael (eds.): *International Relations and the European Union*. Oxford, p. 367-387, here p. 369.

7 Nye, Joseph S. (2001/2002): Seven Tests, Between Concert and Unilateralism. In: *The National Interest*, No. 66, Winter 2001/2002, p. 1-5

Nye then continues with seven tests to determine when unilateralism makes sense. They include situations in which vital survival interests are at stake, but also all those in which multilateral initiatives might appear as recipes for inaction. He concludes:

“In short, American foreign policy [...] should have a general preference of multilateralism, but not all multilateralism. At times, we will have to go it alone.”

Compare this with the following statement in the European Security Strategy (ESS):

“The development of a stronger international society, well functioning international institutions and a rule-based international order is our objective. We are committed to upholding and developing International Law.”⁸

Those quotes reveal a stark difference between what might be termed an “instrumental multilateralism” (which comes in more or less enlightened versions) in America and a “principled multilateralism” in Europe. In practice, of course, the European approach towards multilateralism is rather more complicated than its theory suggests. First of all, a distinction has to be drawn between the concept of multilateralism as it is espoused by European institutions proper on the one side, and that of member states on the other – each of which has its own concept of multilateralism, with significant differences between, say, the British, French and German approaches.⁹ Leaving aside the latter, the European concept of multilateralism reflects EU politics and the characteristics of the EU as a polity in its orientation towards consensus, co-operation and compromise and its inclination to keep everybody on board and happy by striking deals. As is the case for most member states (France and Britain are rather exceptional in that sense), resort to military force is generally frowned upon, though it may be considered in exceptional circumstances, mostly of a humanitarian nature. The European concept of multilateralism is legalistic, and it holds a strong bias towards institutional solutions. This can easily produce tensions between the EU’s internal multilateralism and external relations, as Europe’s performance in the context of WTO negotiations illustrates.

⁸ European Union (2003): A Secure Europe in a Better World, European Security Strategy, Brussels, 12 December, 2003, p. 9

⁹ Krause, Joachim (2004): Multilateralism: Behind European Views. In: *The Washington Quarterly*, 27:2, p. 43-59.

By comparison, American attitudes towards multilateralism generally focus on results, rather than on process (as the EU is wont to do). While the EU accepts constraints on its sovereignty, being used to this from a European internal politics, Americans value national sovereignty highly, and they are generally reluctant to recognize limits to national sovereignty imposed by arrangements of global governance, be that by treaties or by international institutions. The U.S. generally is also much more aware of what John van Oudenaren has called, aptly, “dysfunctional multilateralism.” multilateralism can also result in problems being postponed, exacerbated or misconstrued, rather than effectively addressed. And America is also much more likely to ponder possible contradictions between “norms and numbers” (who decides? within which multilateral framework? Do numbers make right?). Robert Kagan is thus right when he argues that the European concept of multilateralism ultimately reflects its weakness, or perhaps more precisely: its very peculiar, slanted and “soft” power resources and capabilities.¹⁰ Between America and Europe, differences in perceived power capabilities certainly shape respective concepts of multilateralism, as do domestic institutions and history.

In sum, effective multilateralism is a highly demanding political exercise. While a vibrant transatlantic partnership will remain a critical (if not in itself a sufficient) precondition for success in meeting some of the major future global challenges, the organisation of even such a rather modest, traditional exercise in effective multilateralism will have to overcome major difficulties. Those difficulties do not, in the first instance, concern diverging interests; in fact, governments and societies on both sides of the Atlantic still by and large agree on those. Nor are diverging values in themselves a major difficulty: although differences do exist across the Atlantic, they are arguably of a secondary nature and likely to decline sharply with the next American administration. What matters are attitudes towards co-operation and integration: different perceptions of standards and values across the Atlantic may not produce conflicts in themselves, but they may well affect the willingness and even the ability to co-operate with each other. Neither a president Obama nor a president McCain would make co-operation with America easier for Europe initially, but this could change as demands for new, dramatic departures gained momentum in America – particularly if, as I assume here, Obama wins. For as president, Obama may have to re-learn American foreign policy rather rapidly.

¹⁰ Kagan, Robert (2003): *Macht und Ohnmacht, Amerika und Europa in der neuen Weltordnung*. Berlin.

Yet, the most serious difficulties in realising effective multilateralism probably concern the inherent challenges of *how* to make multilateralism effective – challenges such as: who will set the agenda? Who will determine the strategy? Who will exercise leadership in keeping the coalition together, make it act coherently and consistently, and supervise implementation? Will political leaders be able to mobilise domestic political support for doing their part in “effective multilateralism?” Or will governments be driven into undermining effectiveness through obstruction, game-playing, or simply lack of serious commitment and uncertainty of purpose? Again, the capacity to learn – and to unlearn – will be critical here.

Dealing with Russia

Some of those issues have become apparent in recent weeks over the war in Georgia and its implications for future relations between Russia and the West. Again, conventional wisdom seems to hold that the European reaction to Russia's behaviour in that war has been uncertain (the London-based *Economist* gleefully illustrated its cover headline: “Europe stands up to Russia” with a wobbly red pudding¹¹), while America's response is often credited with having been firm and strong.

Again, I beg to disagree. Once the crisis broke, the EU responded surprisingly well: the crisis management by French President Nicholas Sarkozy was quite astute under the circumstances, and the common position adopted by the EU emerged rather rapidly and by and large seemed adequate and constructive: international legal principles were defended uncompromisingly; there were clear signals to Russia that it would have to pay a price for its policies, and that Russia's actions threatened to undermine the foundations of a constructive EU-Russia relationship. On the other hand, the European position kept the door open for Russia to reconsider and modify its policies, it provided reasons and even incentives to do so, and it thus avoided anything, which might have encouraged Russia to escalate the tensions. Overall, the compromise between hardliners and accommodationists within the EU thus seemed just about right. In any case, it was focused clearly on European strengths in soft power, while avoiding a further escalation of tensions. The one serious gap in the European reaction – but this is a very big gap indeed! – was the EU's failure to initiate a truly common European energy policy. This state has so far left many new member states of the EU without adequate protection from possible Russian energy pressure.

11 The Economist, Sept.6, 2008

U.S. policy, on the other hand, was anything but coherent and consistent in the period leading up to the crisis: the signals sent to the Georgian leadership from different parts of the administration were clearly mixed and ambivalent enough to encourage Georgian President Saakashwili to miscalculate badly.¹² And the disagreements within the administration over Georgia seemed to continue after the war: Vice-President Richard Cheney's visit to Georgia, and renewing promises of support and the eventual NATO membership, must have played very well among Moscow's hardliners. Overall, American reactions once more risked to take its policy into directions which would expose American impotence against Russia's overwhelming local military superiority. Washington therefore ran the danger of achieving next to nothing for Georgia and its own objectives in the Caucasus, while encouraging hardliners in Moscow and thus enhancing the chances for another Cold War with Russia.

Above all, the Georgian crisis also demonstrates the need for effective multilateralism, both as regards relations between America and Europe and those between Russia and the West. In recent years, transatlantic approaches to Russia have neither been particularly effective nor very multilateral, and the relationship between Russia and the West has been dominated by unilateralism and bilateralisms, coupled with a deplorable lack of effective policy coordination. In the future, this will not do anymore: neither Russia nor the West will be able to sort out their big problems on their own.

12 Cooper, Helene / Chivers, C.J. / Clifford J. Levy (2008): How a spat became a showdown. In: International Herald Tribune, August 18, 2008, <http://www.iht.com/articles/2008/08/18/america/18diplo.php>

Transatlantic Co-operation and the Future of NATO

By Marco Overhaus

The Future of NATO as a Security Institution

Towards the end of U.S. president George W. Bush's first term the transatlantic relationship was in a very poor state. The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, did not have the unifying effect, which many observers had hoped for. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) was effectively marginalized in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks and suffered a serious blow before and during the Iraq war, which split its member states into two hostile groups, namely the supporters and the opponents of the war. The Alliance has only slowly recovered from this transatlantic crisis. 9/11 also reinforced a military transformation agenda, with a stress on highly mobile and capable forces (the *premium league* so to speak), which was well in line with American military conceptions but which proved rather divisive among the European allies. Although things started to look better with the beginning of Bush's second term, political and security relations among transatlantic partners have remained fragile since.

The core argument of this contribution is more optimistic though. I argue that there is ground for cautious optimism because more recent developments in Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as in relation to Russia, have led to a certain re-appraisal of transatlantic relations and might form a new consensus of NATO's most important tasks. The North Atlantic Alliance, as other international institutions, performs several political and military functions to its members. It can only prosper in the long run if there is broad consensus on the right "mix of functions," which is valued by the member states and which can be performed more efficiently by NATO than by other institutional forums or non-institutionalized forms of co-operation. This has become more difficult for the Alliance since the end of the Cold War. The absence of a single dominating threat and the proliferation of security risks which are multi-faceted and often affect member states to different degrees have made it much harder for the alliance to forge a sense of unity among its members. As a consequence, NATO is constantly doing some serious soul-searching about its proper tasks in today's security landscape.

The principal reason to be more optimistic about the future of transatlantic relations within NATO is not primarily related to a new U.S. president after the forthcoming November elections. Rather it has to do with external challenges. Most importantly, the "War on

Terrorism” and its contested military transformation agenda have been partly replaced by the exigencies of post-conflict reconstruction and state-building. Against the background of the tremendous difficulties, which the international actors are facing in Afghanistan, it appears to be rather audacious to say that state-building can be a unifying endeavour for NATO. Yet, it has the potential to become a much more unifying task among the allies than the “War on Terrorism.” All member states agree that rebuilding war-torn societies in Bosnia, Kosovo or Afghanistan is a crucial challenge for the years to come, even if they may still differ on the specific approaches. The recent clash with Russia over Georgia has also made clear to Europe and America that they need to develop a common policy vis-à-vis Moscow which integrates cooperative offers as well as sticks. Neither American assertiveness nor Europe’s propensity for dialogues turned out to be sufficient to prevent the recent crisis and then deal with it.

The principal challenge for the transatlantic partners now is to constructively nurture and shape a positive agenda of mutual interests while avoiding new confrontations. This is especially true with regard to Russia. While Moscow’s recent war with Georgia might contribute to a new unity within NATO this must not come at any price: the emergence of a new and persistent East-West confrontation on the European continent.

NATO and the War on Terrorism

The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, and the ensuing “War on Terrorism” had a tremendous impact on America’s security policies and thus also on the Atlantic Alliance. When George W. Bush campaigned for the presidency in 2000 he did not have a very pronounced foreign and security policy agenda of his own. Rather he seemed to pick up common themes of the realist stream of the Republican Party: great power co-operation from a position of military and political strength, a reluctant attitude towards military interventions in foreign lands (with a special disgust for “nation- or state-building”) and protecting America through the building of a national missile defence shield.

Bush’s foreign and security policy agenda only fully materialized after the terrorist attacks. Initially there was a considerable show of transatlantic solidarity: NATO for the first time in its history invoked Article 5 on collective defence. While threat perceptions usually change only slowly, there was a remarkable convergence across the Atlantic. European member states, many of which had experienced terrorist movements on their soil for quite long, put transnational terrorism and the proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) on the top of their security agendas.

The problems started, however, when it came to drawing the policy consequences from these new threat perceptions. Today it is widely agreed that the U.S. and many European countries embarked on different courses after 9/11, a divergence which has been described as “risk management approach” versus a “war approach.”¹³ To be sure, this dichotomy is simplistic in the sense that it hides a few important nuances. Yet, it points to the core of transatlantic frictions after 9/11, which also was at the root of the Iraq crisis. Many European countries, such as Germany, followed the risk management approach according to which terrorism is a risk to be managed but which can never fully be defeated. Terrorism cannot be defeated like conventional enemies in conventional wars. Rather it has to be dealt with at its roots in a comprehensive manner, including political, diplomatic, economic, fiscal, judiciary and military measures.

The Bush administration has chosen the “war approach” as a reaction to the terrorist attacks both in rhetoric and in practice: it did not only frame the events as an act of war, its first major campaign was to remove Al Qaida and the Taliban from Afghanistan by military force. The war approach entails the mobilization of massive resources and dealing with terrorism as if it was committed by state actor adversaries. This became evident when President Bush linked the older theme of so-called “rogue states” in his famous “axis-of-evil” speech in January 2002 to the “War on Terrorism.” Washington's approach after 9/11 also led to a massive increase in public spending on the military, the intelligence and homeland security in the following months and years. Many of these investments were directed to conventional military assets. A crucial difference to conventional thinking on warfare was, however, that deterrence as a concept was strongly devalued by the Bush administration after September 11 and was replaced by the doctrine of preventive self-defence. According to this new thinking, transnational terrorists and reckless state regimes differed from traditional adversaries in that they cannot be deterred from attacking by military means. Instead their threat potential has to be destroyed or otherwise neutralized before it can fully materialize. This was the core rationale behind the Iraq war in 2003. These differing approaches to dealing with terrorism and WMD proliferation do not mean that America focused exclusively on military means just as Europe did not fully refrain from them either. Rather, the difference is a matter of degree and priorities. The impact of this difference on NATO, however, was profound and lasting.

13 Nelson, C. Richard (2005): Expanding NATO's Counter-Terrorism Role. In: NATO Review, Special Issue Spring 2005, p. 56-59. And: Coker, Christopher (2002): Globalization and Insecurity in the Twenty-first Century: NATO and the Management of Risk. Adelphi Paper 345. Oxford.

The first impact was, as stated earlier, the marginalization of the Atlantic Alliance in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks. As most NATO allies could not match the American military's advantage to lead a quick and lethal war, the Bush administration decided to circumvent the alliance politically and militarily when toppling the Taliban regime in Afghanistan. The second impact was longer-term. Under Washington's leadership, NATO embarked on a new course towards "globalization," meaning the Alliance's ability to deploy military force quickly to faraway places without *a priori* geographical restrictions. This was in fact an older American agenda that had already been pursued by the Clinton administration but at that time was defeated by the European allies. After 9/11 this European resistance was absent. During the North Atlantic Council's meeting in Reykjavik in May 2002, the foreign ministers stated: "To carry out the full range of missions, NATO must be able to field forces that can move quickly to *wherever they are needed*, sustain operations over distance and time, and achieve their objectives."¹⁴ The Prague Capabilities Commitments of November 2002 pointed into the same direction. The most visible outlet of this new globalized agenda became the much heralded NATO Response Force (NRF). Its core characteristics were quick deployability, mobility, persistence, combat-readiness and jointness. The NRF was supposed to perform a broad range of tasks, from humanitarian operations, deterrence, initial-entry in support of larger missions to full combat. "Any mission, anywhere in the world" was the new force's slogan.¹⁵ The main problem was that NATO member states never really agreed on the NRF's most likely tasks. From Washington's perspective it was primarily meant to catalyze the transformation of European armed forces to meet the new challenges in the age of terrorism. A third impact of the different transatlantic approaches to the fight against terrorism was that national defence conceptions of some alliance members were adapted in a half-hearted way and without wholehearted public support. In Germany, the Defence Policy Guidelines (DPG) of May 2003 were strongly informed by the new notion of having forces to be deployed quickly to far away places. Given Germany's tradition of military restraint, the DPG meant a big conceptual change but were only very hesitantly translated into operational practice since.

Despite these national adaptations, NATO's new transformation agenda in the wake of 9/11 remained divisive within the alliance for at least two reasons: Firstly, it was neither properly

14 NATO (14.5.2002) Final Communiqué. Ministerial Meeting of the North Atlantic Council Held in Reykjavik, Press Release M-NAC-1 (2001) 59, Reykjavik, Paragraph 5. (emphasis added)

15 NATO (up-dated on February 7, 2006), The NATO Response Force. What does it mean in practice, http://www.nato.int/issues/nrf/nrf_a.html, (accessed 7.14.06). This page is not available anymore.

sold to many European publics nor did these publics buy the concept. In Germany, the deployment of military forces remained a very sensitive political issue despite the DPG. Former Defence Minister Peter Struck's message that German security would also have to be defended at the Hindu Kush never really got through in domestic German politics. Secondly, the U.S.-led transformation initiatives soon came into the dust of the Bush administration's pre-emption doctrine and the Iraq war. For instance, it was reported that exercises of the NRF had to be interrupted because of some European allies' fear that this force might become a military tool for pre-emptive strikes against terrorists and rogue states. In Germany, Foreign Minister Fischer was not alone when he publicly expressed his concern about future American "wars of disarmament."¹⁶ The fact that the NRF can be considered to be a failure does not only have to do with these suspicions. The more immediate reason is that obviously the NRF does not offer those resources which are needed in NATO's most important mission today: state-building in Afghanistan.

Post-conflict Reconstruction and State-Building: A New Common Purpose for NATO

State- or "nation-building" is not an entirely new endeavour of international security policy – since the end of the Cold War more than a dozen such missions have taken place under the auspices of the United Nations. At its core lies the attempt to resurrect self-sustaining and legitimate state institutions after the formal ending of a war. After September 11 this endeavour became even more important as the U.S. and its partners have had to cope with the situations in Iraq and Afghanistan.

State-building has increasingly become a common concern in western security cooperation. In all NATO countries, a broad concept of security has by now been firmly established in national discourses, strategies and doctrines (e.g. as *Vernetzte Sicherheit* in the German context). Major allies such as the U.S., Great Britain, Germany or Canada as well as international institutions recently adopted new civil-military concepts and policy-making structures for stabilization and reconstruction. European armies have been constantly restructured to perform crisis management in the form of peacekeeping and the security component of reconstruction since the beginning of the 1990s,¹⁷ particularly in the aftermath of the Yugoslav wars.

16 Fischer, Joschka (2003): Rede des Bundesministers des Auswärtigen zur aktuellen internationalen Lage vor dem deutschen Bundestag am 13. Februar 2003 in Berlin. In: Bulletin des Press- und Informationsamtes der Bundesregierung 1996-2005, 2003 (14-2).

17 Rees, Wyn / Aldrich, Richard J. (2005): Contending Cultures of Counterterrorism: Transatlantic Divergence or Convergence? In: *International Affairs* 81(5), p. 905-923, here: p. 906.

What is more important, however, is that the U.S. under President George W. Bush has profoundly altered its approach to state-building. When Bush took office in 2000 he expressed a strong distaste for Clintonian interventionism and stated that the U.S. would not do nation-building. The International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) was created without U.S. troops. In the context of the Iraq war, Washington even withdrew U.S. forces from Afghanistan in order to send them towards Baghdad. A first change came with the National Security Strategy (NSS) of September 2002 which stated that “America is now threatened less by conquering states than we are by failing ones.” With the beginning of Bush’s second term, the administration put more emphasis on non-military means and multilateral cooperation, not least because of the difficulties America faced in Iraq. This policy change was underpinned by the departure of Donald Rumsfeld from the Pentagon and Condoleezza Rice’s coming to the State Department.

Alongside the changes of political mindsets in the U.S., there was also a considerable rethinking among senior military circles that military means are simply not enough in Afghanistan and Iraq.¹⁸ This rethinking culminated in the National Defense Strategy of June 2008. One of its focuses remains the “Long War” against terrorism but it signals a major departure from previous defence thinking in at least two important ways.¹⁹ First, it de-emphasizes the pre-emption doctrine, which was so contested among European allies. Second it puts military power into a much broader context. It states:

“The use of force plays a role, yet military efforts to capture or kill terrorists are likely to be *subordinate* to measures to promote local participation in government and economic programs to spur development, as well as efforts to understand and address the grievances that often lie at the heart of insurgencies.”²⁰

In sum, there has been a considerable convergence across the Atlantic in recent years on the importance of state-building and the integration of civilian and military means which contrasts to the divergences described above in the fight against terrorism within NATO after 9/11. This is good news for the future of transatlantic security co-operation even though it also has its risks.

18 Gates Sees Terrorism Remaining Enemy No.1 (2008). In: Washington Post, July 31, 2008.

19 Win today’s wars first (2008). In: The Economist, August 7, 2008.

20 Department of Defense, National Defense Strategy 2008, p. 8. <http://www.defenselink.mil/news/2008%20national%20defense%20strategy.pdf> (emphasis added).

Iraq and Afghanistan both have demonstrated the immense difficulties of the task at hand. State-building resembles the playing of three-dimensional chess: the intervener seeks to establish democracy where democracy often has no historical and societal roots; he has to keep local warlords, criminals and insurgents at bay and at the same time has to co-ordinate diverging strategies of reconstruction.²¹ The complexity of the task has made it hard for the international actors to agree on many aspects of state-building, particularly in Afghanistan. There is still disagreement on the relative weight of civilian and military instruments or about the proper use of force. State-building is a long-term and complex endeavour which has to rely on a plurality of actors – and it always contains the risk of failure.

Despite these difficulties NATO countries and their partners have maintained a basic unity of purpose in Afghanistan and now agree that reconstruction is the key. It is important to recognize that this new approach also requires a rethinking of NATO's transformation agenda. The alliance's Riga Summit in 2006 made an important step into this direction when it adopted the Comprehensive Approach²² and the Comprehensive Political Guidance. The latter states that in the future the alliance shall have capabilities in the civil-military area, such as security sector reform, demobilization, disarmament, reintegration of combatants and humanitarian support. The governments of NATO members have thus appreciated the rising importance of stabilization and reconstruction. On this agenda is also the alliance's political and operational ability to cooperate with other international actors and organizations, especially the EU. Currently, the state of affairs between NATO and the EU is unsatisfactory on the political level. Whether the new French approach towards NATO under President Sarkozy and a warmer relationship between Greece and Turkey over Cyprus will improve this poor state in the foreseeable future is an open question.

The Challenge from Russia

Since the end of the Cold War, the relationship with Russia has been a very contested issue among Western governments, and especially within NATO. European allies and the U.S. did not always share the same priorities in this context. While Washington, particularly after September 11 and during the presidency of George W. Bush, thought about alliance enlargement in terms of winning new allies (and bases) for defending its global interests,

21 Frewen, John (2008), Contested Nation-Building. The Challenge of Countering Insurgency in Afghanistan in 2007. In: Australian Army Journal, 5(1), p. 19-37, here: p. 29.

22 NATO, Riga Summit Declaration, 29.11.08, paragraph 10. <http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/2006/p06-150e.htm>

Europeans were more concerned with creating a comprehensive and stable security order for their continent – with Russia obviously being a crucial actor.

The recent deterioration in the Western-Russian relationship offers both chances and risks for the future of transatlantic security co-operation within the Atlantic Alliance. As regards the opportunities, this deterioration can lead to more unity and a heightened awareness of NATO's function as a security insurer. The current clash with Moscow over Georgia once more demonstrated the need for unity among like-minded democracies vis-à-vis Russia. Any illusions that Russia can transform itself into a market democracy within a few years or can be fully integrated into pan-European security institutions are gone. One important reason why the relationship between the West and Russia has deteriorated over the last two or three years lies in the authoritarian tendencies of the Kremlin and the rise of security-oriented hard liners in Moscow.²³ It is a reality that many powerful figures in Russia still think in terms of influence spheres, power balances and zero-sum politics.²⁴ The past experience has shown that Moscow will exploit differences amongst EU and NATO members whenever they arise and that unity is a prerequisite to be taken seriously. A new Cold War or even a military East-West standoff is still far away, yet NATO's function as a security reassurance has been reinforced – particularly to its new members in Central-Eastern Europe.

The risks are that unity within the transatlantic context over Russia eventually comes at the price of a new permanent East-West confrontation in and around Europe. Obviously, the Alliance's "dual-track-strategy" of enlarging and engaging – to enlarge while intensifying the political relationship with Moscow – has not worked. Concerning enlargement it became clear that NATO, as a military alliance, is not the right organization to integrate all of Europe and the Caucasus. It is heavily burdened by the Russian-American competition for influence in the former Soviet empire, lacks the overall political and economic structures needed for conflict transformation (and eventual solution) and finally, with its hard-power focus, contributes to domestic polarization in some countries, such as Ukraine. Against this background, the lessons to be learned from the Georgian crisis should *not* be to accelerate the path to Georgian and Ukrainian NATO membership.

23 Adomeit, Hannes/ Kupferschmidt, Frank (2008): Russland und die NATO. Krise verwalten oder Potentiale entwickeln? SWP Studie 2008/S 10, March 2008, p. 15.

24 Ibid, p.16.

Engagement with Russia has not worked either. With the creation of the Permanent Joint Council in 1997 and of the NATO-Russia Council in 2002 there have been many meetings with Russian officials on various levels yet the substantive political results of this cooperation remained very modest. What is more important is that despite these numerous meetings the degree of mutual trust has not become sufficiently strong to withstand negative changes in the political climate – as could be witnessed since the beginning of 2007 when former President Vladimir Putin changed Russia's course towards NATO and suspended his country's participation in important arms control treaties. The Georgian crisis of 2008 was only the culmination of these developments.

Even though Russia's material capabilities are often exaggerated, there can be no doubt that it remains an indispensable actor in international security policy. Apart from its importance as a supplier of energy resources Moscow's co-operation is essential in many issue areas such as non-proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction or state-building in Afghanistan. Russia has also "negative powers" as it can destabilize countries of the former Soviet Union with Russian-speaking or pro-Russian minorities. The crisis in the Caucasus has already led to calls for punishment against Moscow and the suspension of the relationship altogether. Understandingly, it has also reignited historical fears of Russian resurgence in Eastern Europe. Fortunately, NATO and the EU have so far resisted such a course of isolating Russia and have rather sought to engage it politically and diplomatically. Given the interdependencies between Russia and the West this is only a rational choice.

To sum up, the future challenge for transatlantic security co-operation within NATO will be to seize upon this need for unity among allies without foreclosing long-term options for cooperation with Russia. Specifically, Atlantic partners should clearly and openly state their essentials (one might also call this "red lines") for co-operation with Russia, such as the principle of territorial integrity, and in the future avoid any opportunities to be divided by third parties. In the short term, the aim has to be to restore the existing NATO-Russia institutions and forums and to secure what has been achieved in the past. In the long term, the Atlantic partners and Russia need to think harder about how they can construct effective political, economic and military institutions for Europe as a whole. I argue in this contribution that NATO will not be up to this task. These institutions will have to enable the countries of the former Soviet empire to integrate with western countries, according to their own wishes, without creating new competing blocs in Europe. This will also be a crucial task for the next American administration.

Conclusion and Outlook: Prospects for Transatlantic Security Co-operation after the U.S. Elections

The core argument of this contribution was that the potentials for transatlantic security cooperation within NATO have improved recently. The major reasons for this assessment are not primarily linked to a particular constellation of governments on both sides of the Atlantic. Rather they relate to lessons learned in the “War on Terrorism,” particularly in Iraq and Afghanistan, and to the changing relationship with Russia. Since 2005, the military dimension of the international fight against terrorism has increasingly been placed into a broader political, economic and societal context and has thus stepped into the background of NATO cooperation. Given the contested nature of the military dimension after 9/11 this change is significant. The terrorism agenda has been replaced by the endeavour of state-building which, despite its complexities and durability and despite the troubles in Afghanistan, is much more suitable to provide a sense of unity to the alliance.

All this does not mean that specific governments or administrations do not matter. For the German-American relationship the change from the Schröder government to the Grand Coalition led by Angela Merkel made quite a difference. Moreover, the U.S. elections in any case offer the opportunity to make *tabula rasa* after the Bush administration’s departure and to have an important “atmospheric” new beginning.

It is widely assumed that the Democrats presidential candidate, Barack Obama, would be the better choice for Europe over his Republican competitor John McCain. For instance, the former’s willingness to engage adversaries and “rogue states” is more in line with European preferences than more assertive options. In contrast, John McCain’s worldview looks more pessimistic and thus “Bush-like.”

The difference between both candidates on those topics, which concern Europe most, might not be as stark as this, however. Both have announced to intensify cooperation with allies, including the Atlantic alliance. While both stress the need to protect the homeland, they also agree that military force needs to be embedded in broader strategies, including the need to address post conflict reconstruction politically and economically. McCain, in Europe sometimes portrayed as the hardliner, recently stated that in the struggle against extremism “scholarships will be far more important than bombs.” Finally, the Republican candidate is a strong supporter of nuclear disarmament, not least of U.S. arsenals, a topic that bodes well in most European capitals.

In the end, the future of transatlantic security cooperation will depend more on whether NATO will be able to fulfil its most important functions than on the outcome of the U.S. presidential elections. Top among these functions will be supporting state-building in Afghanistan and beyond as well as contributing to a stable security order in the whole of Europe.

Bridging the Atlantic – Transatlantic Economic Co-operation after President Bush

By Stormy Mildner

Particularly during the first term of the Bush administration, transatlantic relations were stressed by growing mutual disrespect and disagreements in foreign and security policy matters – over the establishment of the International Criminal Court, the Kyoto Protocol on climate protection, and, most notably, the American approach to fighting terrorism and the Iraq war. Economic disputes also sharpened over U.S. duties on steel imports, U.S. tax subsidies (Foreign Sales Corporations), European consumer and food safety standards, and aviation subsidies on both sides of the Atlantic. The 1995 New Transatlantic Agenda and the 1998 Transatlantic Economic Partnership lost momentum; transatlantic dialogues such as the Business Dialogue (TABD) yielded little results. The future of the transatlantic relationship thus looked dim.²⁵

But although many business leaders feared that discord over political and security matters would spill over into the economic realm, transatlantic economic relations showed considerable resilience. Commercial ties not only remained the deepest in the world, less than 2 % of the volume of trade and investment flows was affected by political conflicts. And this affect was due to conventional domestic politics rather than the geo-political rift. Moreover, the U.S. and EU resolved some long-standing trade disputes. Particularly under the second term of the Bush administration, the transatlantic economic agenda was revitalized, culminating in the Framework for Advancing Transatlantic Economic Integration at the EU-U.S. summit on April 30, 2007, and the establishment of the permanent high-level Transatlantic Economic Council (TEC) to steer and evaluate regulatory co-operation.

While the 2007 summit was generally praised as a success, the two subsequent TEC meetings presented but a first step on a long and thorny road towards closer regulatory co-operation. Progress has been slow since and coverage of sectors and industry-specific problems incomplete. That regulatory co-operation under the TEC has yielded limited success so far can be attributed to the difficulties of establishing reciprocity in negotiations as well as the

25 Pollack, Mark / Shaffer, Gregory (2005): The Future of Transatlantic Economic Relations: Continuity Amid Discord. In: Andrews, David / Pollack, Mark / Shaffer, Gregory / Wallace, Helen: The Future of Transatlantic Economic Relations: Continuity Amid Discord. Florence, p. 3-8.

lack of methods for quantifying the benefits and costs of policy changes.²⁶ Above all, harmonization or mutual recognition of standards and regulations requires complex legislative changes in an often highly politicized policy environment. Especially when dealing with issues such as consumer protection, health and food standards, co-operation requires a high degree of trust in the rule-setting competency of the negotiating partner. But this is difficult when regulatory systems and philosophies diverge as starkly as in the U.S. and the EU. Different approaches to hormone-treated beef and genetically modified food are prominent examples for this. Co-operation is also extremely difficult when national security concerns are affected, such as in the case of the U.S. container scanning requirement or the Airbus/Boeing dispute. No matter of who will win the forthcoming presidential elections in the U.S., these conflicts will remain a serious challenge for transatlantic economic co-operation.

Transatlantic Commercial Relations: Facts and Figures

While a considerable part of American trade has shifted towards Asia in the last decade, the U.S. and the EU are still each other's most important trading partners. In 2007, around 21 % of total EU exports went to the U.S., 13 % of its imports came from the U.S. The EU received about 21 % of American exports; 18 % of U.S. imports originated in the EU. The U.S. is thus the most important export market for European companies (outside the EU); for U.S. companies, the EU ranks second after Canada but before Mexico.²⁷ With regard to investment, the level of integration is even deeper. In 2006, EU investments in the U.S. accounted for 28 % of the global amount invested by the EU abroad. The U.S. is the main foreign investor in the EU, accounting for 48 % of total EU Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) inflows. The same is true the other way around: with nearly 59 % of total U.S. investment outflows in 2006, the EU ranks first in U.S. FDI destinations. No other region of the world has invested as much in the U.S. as Europe has: up to three-quarters of all FDI stock in the U.S. are held by European companies. It is thus foreign investment in particular which drives transatlantic commerce. Foreign affiliate sales are the second backbone of transatlantic economic integration. Between 2001 and 2006, U.S. foreign affiliates' earnings from Europe more than doubled, rising to nearly 147 billion Dollars in 2006. European foreign affiliates operating in the U.S. also generated record-level profits of 89 billion Dollars in 2006. There is

26 Deutsch, Klaus (2008): Transatlantic Integration – Delivery Time is Now. Deutsche Bank Research Current Issues, June 4, 2008. Frankfurt am Main. http://www.dbresearch.com/PROD/DBR_INTERNET_EN-PROD/PROD000000000225962.PDF

27 European Commission (2008): DG Trade, USA Statistics, September 10, 2008, http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2006/september/tradoc_113465.pdf; Foltete, Anne (2008): EU Foreign Direct Investment by the EU. In: eurostat 41/2008, http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_OFFPUB/KS-SF-08-041/EN/KS-SF-08-041-EN.PDF

no evidence that the rift in foreign and security policy matters had any significant impact on the volume of transatlantic trade and investment flows.²⁸

Trade Conflicts: Interests and Ideologies

Given this deep level of integration, the high number of transatlantic trade disputes registered at the World Trade Organization (WTO) comes as little surprise. In 2008, the EU was a party in 78 dispute cases, of which 31 were launched by the EU against the U.S. The U.S. complained in 90 cases, 18 of those directed against the EU and further 17 against single EU member states.²⁹ Most recently, the U.S. requested WTO dispute settlement consultations with the EU regarding duties imposed on certain products, which should be duty-free under the WTO Information Technology Agreement (May 2008). In June, the U.S. requested a WTO panel to review whether the EU's banana import regime breached its WTO obligations. EU-U.S. trade disputes have many different causes – accordingly some are more difficult to settle than others. There are those, which evolve around the protection or unfair support of national industries (the steel sector being one example) through “at-the-border” protection, such as tariffs and quotas, or subsidies. The number and intensity of these conflicts often increase during election years when producers demand extra support or protection in return for endorsements or campaign contributions. Other conflicts result from different national regulatory systems and preferences and are thus much harder to resolve. When faced with uncertainties about the risks of products or procedures, European regulators are much more willing to take precautionary measures than their American counterparts. Thus, they base their decision to restrict or ban a certain product not only on scientific evidence but take into consideration potential threats as well as social and economic implications. Whereas judging the acceptable level of risk to a society is an eminently political responsibility in the EU, regulation in the U.S. is more science-based. The potential for conflicts between the two trading partners is amplified by the lack of trust in each other's intentions and preferences. While the EU justifies the import restrictions on Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) or hormone-treated beef with health considerations, the U.S. suspects protectionism of the EU agricultural sector. Equally difficult to settle are disputes resulting from varying foreign policy goals and national security preferences. These include not only EU complaints regarding U.S. extraterritorial sanctions but, to a certain degree, also the Airbus/Boeing case. Unlike in the case of consumer protection, it is here the U.S. which takes the more

28 Hamilton, Daniel S. / Quinlan, Joseph P. (2008): *The Transatlantic Economy 2008*. Center for Transatlantic Relations. Washington D.C., p. vi.

29 WTO (2008): *Dispute Settlement, Disputes by Country*. July 2008, http://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/dispu_e/dispu_by_country_e.htm

precautionary approach – at least since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001.

Struggling over Bio-engineered Foods

Viewing genetically modified agricultural products as substantially different from their conventional counterparts, the EU has adopted much stricter regulatory procedures for their approval and marketing than the U.S. In May 2003, after years of fruitless bilateral negotiations, the U.S., together with Canada and Argentina – the world’s three biggest producers of GM agricultural products –, finally filed a complaint within the WTO, requesting a dispute settlement procedure on the EU’s GMO approval process. The reason: in 1998, the European Commission had effectively enforced a moratorium when it stopped approving any kind of bio-engineered agricultural crops. The U.S. not only asserted that the de facto moratorium heavily restricted imports of agricultural products. It criticized in particular that a number of EU member states maintained national marketing and import bans on specific biotech products, which had already been approved on the EU-wide level. In fall 2006, the WTO dispute settlement panel faulted the EU for undue delay in approving GM products for a four-year period ending in 2003. The panel also ruled against national-level bans in several EU member states (Austria, France, Germany, Greece, Italy and Luxembourg).³⁰

While the EU emphasised its intention to comply with the panel report, the European Commission found it hard to implement the ruling. In October 2007, the EU environment ministers failed to agree on whether to force Austria to lift its ban on two types of GM maize. The EU could thus not meet the WTO’s original deadline for implementation of the panel’s report in November 2007. When the extended “reasonable period of time” ended in January 2008, U.S. Trade Representative Susan Schwab announced that the U.S. would temporarily suspend its rights to retaliate in order to provide the EU with an opportunity to demonstrate meaningful progress on the approval of biotech products. The U.S. wanted to periodically evaluate EU progress. In May 2008, Austria – the only remaining country cited in the WTO report – lifted its ban on the import and processing of GM corn. While political opposition to GM foods might weaken in the face of the current food crisis, the future of U.S.-EU GMO trade remains uncertain, however. This was reaffirmed by the recent recommendation of EU environment ministers (July 4, 2008) under the lead of the French EU presidency to tighten

30 Ahearn, Raymond (et al) (2008): European Union-US Trade and Investment Relations: Key Issues, CRS Report to Congress. Washington D.C., p. 14-15.

the standards for authorising biotech products.³¹

The Airbus-Boeing Dispute

The conflict over government support for the aviation industry has simmered equally long between the EU and the U.S. For both sides, aerospace is not just part of industrial and technological development but one with a strong relevance to national security and geopolitics. In late 2000, when Airbus announced that it had formally launched a program to construct the new Airbus A380, the world's largest commercial passenger aircraft, the dispute once more escalated. As Airbus reached competitive parity with Boeing in the global market place, the U.S. began to regard the 1992 U.S.-EU Agreement on Large Civil Aircraft, which regulated government support for the civil aircraft industry, with growing concern. Talks for revising the agreement started to intensify in early 2004 at the same time as speculations surfaced on subsidies for a new Airbus plane, the A 350, which would compete with the planned Boeing 787. In August 2004, President Bush openly declared Airbus subsidies as unfair, asking then U.S. Trade Representative Robert Zoellick to take all measures to put an end to them.

While both sides attempted to find a compromise, the talks ultimately failed, leading the U.S. not only to terminate the 1992 agreement but to file a WTO complaint against the EU in October 2004. The EU retaliated by requesting its own WTO dispute settlement process shortly after. With the reciprocal complaint at the WTO, the U.S.-EU aviation trade dispute threatened to escalate further, not only seriously straining transatlantic relations but also burdening the WTO dispute settlement body. Since no compromise could be reached during subsequent bilateral negotiations, two panels were established in October 2005. At a panel hearing in the EU case against the U.S. in fall 2007, the EU claimed that Boeing received about 24 billion Dollars in indirect support via research and development contracts from the Department of Defense and NASA, as well as tax concessions from individual U.S. states such as Illinois and Washington State. In the U.S. case against the EU, which is still in an earlier stage, the U.S. alleged that Airbus benefited from illegal subsidies in the form of launch aid from the governments of Germany, the United Kingdom, France and Spain worth 205 billion Dollars.³²

31 WTO (2003): European Communities – Measures Affecting the Approval and Marketing of Biotech Products. September 29, 2003, http://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/dispu_e/cases_e/ds291_e.htm

32 Ahearn, Raymond (et al) (2008): European Union-U.S. Trade and Investment Relations: Key Issues, CRS Report to Congress, Washington D.C., p. 10-11; European Commission (2007): WTO Dispute Settlement. The

The Airbus-Boeing conflict has implications far beyond the civil aircraft industry. In early 2008, the first of three U.S. Air Force contracts for refuelling tankers – one of the biggest in the Air Force’s history – was awarded to Airbus parent EADS and Northrop Grumman. However, the U.S. government reopened the 35 billion Dollar contract after the Government Accountability Office (GAO) reassessed the Air Force’s decision, finding significant errors, including the cost evaluation of the two bids. What is more, the House Armed Services Committee linked the tanker competition to future WTO rulings on Airbus subsidies. Congressmen argued that EADS had an unfair advantage because Airbus received government launch money for the A330.³³ The decision has further widened the gulf between the EU and the U.S. in aviation matters. In Europe, officials criticised that the reopening of the tanker deal was a politically motivated decision in an election year.

Revitalizing the Transatlantic Agenda

The moderate progress under the Framework for Advancing Transatlantic Economic Integration, signed on April 30, 2007, under Germany’s EU presidency, proves how difficult co-operation in politically sensitive areas is. The new framework agreement seeks to deepen transatlantic economic integration by eliminating non-tariff barriers posed by regulations such as norms and standards. Knowing from experience that this would not be possible without continuous high-level support and co-operation beyond the annual summits, the U.S. and EU created the Transatlantic Economic Council (TEC) to steer and evaluate regulatory co-operation as well as to prevent and mitigate trade conflicts. The TEC is currently chaired by Daniel M. Price, Assistant to the U.S. President for International Economic Affairs and European Commission Vice-President Günter Verheugen. Through the creation of the TEC, the bilateral relationship has gained a new dimension and is more binding in character than in the past. Furthermore, the TEC’s high-level composition, together with its regular consultations within the Transatlantic Legislators Dialogue, the Transatlantic Consumers Dialogue and the Transatlantic Business Dialogue, as well as with the heads of independent regulatory authorities, is a good basis for harmonizing systemic differences.

At the 2007 summit, the two trading partners also agreed on several “lighthouse priority projects” including mutual recognition of financial market regulations, enhanced protection of

WTO Boeing Airbus Dispute. Geneva, January 16, 2008, http://ec.europa.eu/trade/issues/respectrules/dispute/pr160108_en.htm

33 Tiron, Roxana (2008): Air Force Prodded to Probe Subsidies in Tanker Contract. In: The Hill, May 2008, <http://thehill.com/the-executive/air-force-prodded-to-probe-subsidies-in-tanker-contract-2008-05-14.html>

intellectual property rights (particularly in third markets), development of common standards regarding secure trade and establishment of a regular dialog on investment barriers. Furthermore, the EU and the U.S. signed a first-stage Air Transport Agreement. The agreement that came into force on March 30, 2008, replaced existing bilateral agreements between individual EU member states and Washington, allowing every U.S. and EU airline to fly between any city in the EU and any city in the U.S. Progress was also made with regard to reconciling the differences between accounting standards, i.e. the U.S. Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (U.S. GAAP) and International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS). The TEC held its first meeting in Washington D.C., on November 9, 2007, at which an investment dialogue was launched. Additionally, the TEC established a road map for reaching mutual recognition of U.S. and EU customs-trade partnership programs (referring to border security measures adopted in both regions) by 2009. A week after the TEC meeting, on November 15, the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission voted unanimously to accept financial statements from foreign companies registered in the U.S., which are in accordance with International Financial Reporting Standards, without reconciliation to U.S. GAAP.

The second meeting of the TEC, which took place on May 13, 2008, achieved little concrete results. The EU and the U.S. both affirmed their commitment to promoting open investment policies. The EU promised to make sure that trade in cosmetics was not disrupted by the implementation of REACH (Registration, Evaluation and Authorization of Chemical substances), the new registration process for chemicals within the EU – a particular concern of U.S. producers. The Union also announced to positively decide on the equivalence of U.S. GAAP to EU rules in the course of 2008. However, many frictions persisted. While the Air Transport Agreement did provide new investment regulations, the requirement that foreign nationals must not own more than 25 % of the voting stock of a U.S. airline remained more than a nuisance for European investors. On trade in cosmetics, the EU will prohibit the sale of cosmetics tested on animals from March 2009, while the U.S. requires those tests for sales in the U.S. market. With regard to customs and border protection, the TEC also did not deal with U.S. legislation requiring 100 % scanning of containers bound for U.S. ports. In mid-2007, President Bush had signed the 9/11 Commission Recommendations Act which mandates that all U.S.-bound containers must be screened at the port of shipment starting on July 1, 2012 at the latest. The resulting extra costs for securing harbour facilities and the introduction of control systems will be tremendous.

Most of all, the second TEC meeting in Brussels and the subsequent EU-U.S. summit in

Brodo, Slovenia, were overshadowed by the poultry conflict. The EU has banned poultry imports from the U.S. since 1997. Although of little economic importance – the ban presents only a small fraction of EU-U.S. trade – the issue has been stylized as the make-or-break test for the TEC. U.S. Trade Representative Susan Schwab argued: “The poultry issue is one that has been of significant concern, both in its actual facts and its symbolic importance in terms of our ability to resolve transatlantic trade conflicts.”³⁴ Despite a recent report from the European Food Safety Authority stating that the U.S. method of disinfecting poultry was harmless to consumers, virtually all EU member states opposed lifting the eleven-year old import ban. Thus, at the TEC meeting in mid-May, Günter Verheugen could only promise to find a solution before the next TEC meeting scheduled to take place in autumn 2008. Yet, a quick solution of this dispute does not seem likely, since the European Scientific Committee on Veterinary Measures Relating to Public Health dismissed the Commission’s proposal to end the ban and the European Parliament subsequently passed a resolution in favour of maintaining import restrictions.

A Long and Thorny Road

The forces for deepening transatlantic economic co-operation are strong, including, most of all, the sheer size and importance of trade and investment flows. On both sides of the Atlantic, a growing number of companies are lobbying for deeper integration, viewing each other’s markets as critical to their commercial success. Furthermore, the transatlantic economic partnership rests on a solid foundation, including common interests and ideologies as well as a general overarching consensus about the structure of the international economic architecture such as the WTO. A strong institutional setting, including various transatlantic dialogues and annual high-level meetings, provides a platform for conflict resolution.

Nonetheless, transatlantic economic co-operation faces some serious challenges at the end of George W. Bush’s presidency. Above all, the direction of U.S. trade policy will be hotly contested in the coming years. Specifically, contested issues will be whether or not to increasingly use trade policy to promote environmental and labour rights, how to employ trade remedy laws against unfair trade practices abroad, and how to design and fund programs that assist displaced workers. One important reason is that public support for free trade is weakening. According to a CNN/Opinion Research poll in late June 2008, half of the registered voters think that trade threatens the economy. Many blame the presumably

34 quoted in Schomberg, William (2008): EU Expects U.S. to Turn to WTO in Poultry Dispute. Reuters UK, June 6 2008, <http://uk.reuters.com/article/rbssFinancialServicesAndRealEstateNews/idUKL0689325520080606>

misguided free trade policy of the Bush administration for the large U.S. trade deficit, declining wages, increasing income disparity and growing unemployment.³⁵

The Democrat's presidential candidate, Senator Barack Obama, in particular, catered to this sentiment, repeatedly criticizing free trade agreements such as the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) as unfair to American workers. Obama also promised to counter unfair trade policies abroad more vigorously. According to the Cato Institute, Obama is an interventionist in trade matters: he voted against CAFTA, the free trade agreement with the Central American countries, because of labour and environmental standards. While supporting some Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) (e.g. with Peru), Obama criticized the trade accords with Columbia and South Korea – both signed under the Bush administration but not yet ratified by Congress. Obama also voted in favour of Senator Schumer's Chinese Currency Bill (2005) to take actions against China's undervalued currency.³⁶ Republican presidential candidate John McCain, on the other hand, explicitly supports open markets. McCain describes himself as a free trader. Acknowledging that trade dislocates some U.S. workers, he does not believe that protectionism is the right answer to growing global competition. Rather, he proposes job training and education programs. His record in Congress proves his free trade sentiment: McCain supported NAFTA as well as CAFTA and is in favour of the pending FTAs with Columbia, Panama and South Korea. He also believes that trade is an important tool to open closed societies particularly in the Middle East and thus proposed new FTAs in this region.

So far, transatlantic economic integration only played a minor role on Obama's agenda. Even in his July 2008 Berlin speech, he evaded trade issues. McCain, on the other hand, expressed his support for a U.S.-EU Free Trade Agreement on a visit to Brussels. Does this mean that McCain would be good for transatlantic economic integration and Obama bad? Not necessarily. No matter who will eventually move into the White House, regulatory cooperation will remain difficult when consumer safety or national security issues are concerned. Furthermore, success of the TEC strongly depends on the position of Congress. Whereas small regulatory deals can circumvent the legislative process in Congress, far-reaching policy decisions need its support.³⁷ Overall, the new initiative will only bear fruits with continuous support from the highest political level. But how much political capital the

35 Stokes, Bruce (2008): Trading Gibes. In: National Journal July 26, 2008.

36 Cato Institute: Free Trade, Free Markets: Rating Congress, <http://www.freetrade.org/congress>

37 Verclas, Kirsten (2008): Commerce, Climate Change, and China: German-American Challenges in 2009. AICGS Issuebrief, June 2, 2008.

next U.S. president will invest into the Framework for Advancing Transatlantic Economic Integration strongly depends on tangible progress before the November elections, including solving long-term conflicts such as the poultry dispute. Pressure on the upcoming TEC meeting in fall 2008 is thus high.

Nightmares and Dreamscapes – In Spite of Prejudice and Misperception, the German-American Alliance Remains Strong

By Patrick Keller

When President Gerald Ford took the oath of office in the aftermath of the Watergate crisis, he told his fellow Americans: “Our long national nightmare is over.” With regard to the final days of the administration of George W. Bush, most German policy-makers express a similar sentiment. Even the foreign policy spokesman for Angela Merkel’s conservative CDU, Eckart von Klaeden, recently stated that he is “not going to miss” President Bush.³⁸ For most of the German public, press, and punditry this is a rather “conservative” statement indeed – Bush’s approval ratings in Germany have always been abysmal, with 40% of Germans viewing him as “a grave danger to world peace.”³⁹ Accordingly, his imminent departure is eagerly awaited as allies in Germany and most of Europe are hoping for a significant change in U.S. foreign policy. In short, they expect to be woken up from what they perceive as the nightmare of the Bush years.

This sentiment is maybe best expressed by a headline from the liberal German weekly *Die Zeit* in 2006, shortly before U.S. Congressional elections: “Give us back the good America!” Then, as much as in similar commentaries today, the demand of the editors was a reflection of the attitude of a majority of Germans. It is also indicative of what is wrong with the German discourse about America and transatlantic relations. After all, the slogan is misleading on at least three accounts.

First, it curiously suggests a German right to have a say in the matter of U.S. elections. At the same time, the thinly veiled support for the Democratic Party allows for righteous indignation and many “I told you so”-editorials in case the American voter should not heed the call of the German media. America is the 500-pound Gorilla – so powerful that every of its movements affects everybody. The wish to gain some control over the Gorilla’s decision-making process is therefore understandable – and yet a misunderstanding of international politics and an insult to U.S. sovereignty. Just imagine the German reaction had the *New York Times* editorialized in such stark terms in favour of the opposition party during the last federal election.

38 Interview with RBB radioeins on June 10, 2008. http://www.von-klaeden.de/portal/alias__klaeden/lang__de-DE/mid__10912/ItemID__76/tabid__4337/default.aspx

39 Institute for Market Analysis. Leipzig, August 28, 2008.

Second, the distinction between a “good” and a “bad” America is as arbitrary as it is presumptuous and counterproductive. At its most basic level, it is a discrimination against core constituencies of the Republican coalition, namely religious, socially conservative, rural, and fiercely patriotic Americans. Of course, some of the convictions and (foreign) policies advocated by the representatives of this group are not in sync with the beliefs of most Germans. That, however, does surely not qualify them as “bad” in the sense that they are morally corrupt. To the contrary, they are as much a part of the democratic West as Germany is and must be accepted as a legitimate and truthful expression of America, the most important and most reliable ally of democratic Germany.

Third, the slogan suggests a false longing for what is remembered as “the good old days” of the German-American partnership. The times of profound German-American discord are conveniently forgotten. From Konrad Adenauer’s disappointment in John F. Kennedy’s inaction during the building of the Berlin Wall to the anti-Vietnam movement and the massive protest against Ronald Reagan and the NATO double-track decision to the European rows with the Clinton administration over how to react to Balkan wars – the history of German-American co-operation is also a history of crises. The transatlantic rift caused by the bitter debate over the Iraq war in 2003 may have been particularly deep but it was not the first of its kind.

It is thus imperative that Germans discard their illusions about America, abandon their self-righteous moral high-ground and achieve a realistic perspective of what the transatlantic relationship should be. As always, history provides some clues. For an older generation of Atlanticists, gratefulness was the key political category. The U.S. had not only liberated Germany from Nazism, it had also laid the groundwork for economic recovery and prosperity in the Federal Republic. Moreover, American deterrence had protected Germany during the Cold War, and it was primarily U.S. influence with the allies that made German reunification possible. But at the same time, the German-American relationship never recovered from this high point which was epitomized in George Bush Senior’s offer to Germany of a “partnership in leadership.” Understandably, Germans were too preoccupied with the aftershocks of unification to follow up on the offer, and the EU was not yet ready to become a meaningful actor. Simultaneously, the strategic focus of the U.S. began to shift. With the Soviet Union gone and Europe about to be whole and free, the lone superpower’s attention was drawn more and more to the remaining or emerging global trouble spots, particularly the Middle East and the Pacific region. These developments had a centrifugal effect on the transatlantic

relationship, a natural consequence of the altered geo-strategic landscape after the end of the Cold War.

The shake-up of transatlantic relations under Bush had been long in the making. True, Bush's policies after 9/11, especially his doctrine of unilateralism and pre-emption, exacerbated the division, as did Chancellor Schroeder's unnecessary and brusque alignment with France, Russia, and China in an effort to counterbalance the U.S. Nevertheless, these respective policies were an outgrowth of deeper geo-political trends that have been tearing Germany and the U.S. apart ever since the implosion of Soviet communism. A mere change in political leadership will not alter this strategic reality. The German-American relationship is not suffering from a Bush problem, but from a lack of common purpose.

Still, a look at five crucial insights regarding the transatlantic partnership gives reason to hope that this common purpose can be retrieved or recreated.

1. Extreme views have been discredited on both sides of the Atlantic.

In Washington, the neoconservative rhetoric has been subdued, at least for now. The disastrous post-invasion scenarios in Iraq and Afghanistan demonstrate that the U.S. cannot go it alone. The U.S. needs allies, strong European allies in particular, to manage the reconstruction of war-torn societies, stabilize failing or failed states, and to gain a greater sense of legitimacy in global affairs⁴⁰ – not to mention other challenges that call for broad international cooperation such as climate change and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Policymakers in Germany, on the other hand, have understood that the main threats to German security, particularly international terrorism, cannot be dealt with by an approach of all talk and no action, all carrots and no sticks. They have also understood that despite disagreements and difficulties, the U.S. remains Germany's vital ally. Without the U.S. nuclear shield and a strong NATO, German security cannot be guaranteed. Moreover, as the division over the Iraq war reminded everyone, it is impossible to unite Europe against the U.S. Only on a firm Atlantic foundation can the EU become a powerful, integrated, and unified voice in world affairs. On both sides the pragmatists have thus trumped the ideologues. Their repair work had already begun when Bush and Angela Merkel started mending fences. Under a new American president this will continue.

40 For a similar argument in the context of NATO see the contribution of Marco Overhaus in this volume.

2. The U.S. will remain by far the most powerful state in the world for decades to come

Current bestseller lists and elite debates offer a certain sense of déjà-vu. Fareed Zakaria, Richard Haass and many others have recently come back to Paul Kennedy's theme of “imperial overstretch” and American decline. American deficits, economic crises, a vastly unpopular president, and a rising economic powerhouse in Asia by the end of the 1980s led many observers to pronounce the end of the American century. Indeed, they advised the U.S. to get used to playing second fiddle in world affairs. Give or take a little – the deficit is somewhat higher, the economic crisis not quite as profound, the president called Bush instead of Reagan, and Japan passed the standard of the main geo-economic challenger to China – and analysts make the same case today. Back then, the prophets of decline were embarrassed by the end of the Cold War and the American boom of the 1990s. This time around, it is more than likely that they are wrong again.

Sure, the economic growth and potential of China and other emerging markets are impressive. But they are starting from a comparatively very low level. The U.S. economic growth under Bush, despite costly wars and misfortune at home, has consistently outdone that of all other G8 states with the exception of Great Britain. What is even more important U.S. companies remain far ahead in value creation – the most original and most profitable ideas in trendsetting industries still come from the U.S. That is so because the American political system of democratic, individualistic free-market capitalism is the most competitive and the most stable in the world. This fact is unlikely to change and will prove a crucial barrier to China's further rise.

Power in international affairs is not just measured in economic strength. But in every relevant category the U.S. remains in the lead and is likely to defend this position. This is of course most striking when it comes to the traditional hard currency of international politics, military power. U.S. defence spending continues to exceed that of the next ten strongest states *combined*. Still, this immense sum amounts to only about 6% of U.S. GDP; under Kennedy, the U.S. spent more than twice this share on defence. This amount of money ensures that in terms of military capability, technological know-how, and ability to project power no serious competitor will emerge for a long time.

Last but not least, American culture remains dominant. American education and research, American movies, books, and music, and the American way of life in general continue to inspire people everywhere and to shape the global community. Therefore, Germans should

not fall for the nervous headlines – American supremacy is here to stay for quite a while.⁴¹ This is good news for the German-American partnership. After all, a true multi-polar world order, where authoritarian regimes in Russia and China see eye to eye with the U.S. and divide the globe into spheres of influence, can hardly be in accordance with German values and interests.

3. America remains the only capable custodian of the international system from which Germany benefits

The current international system is an American invention. It was built on the ruins of European balance of power politics and Nazism (and it overcame Nazism's twin, Soviet communism). It is a liberal international system, defined by the rule of law, freedom, and economic openness. The pillars of this system are the United Nations, NATO, the Bretton-Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization (WTO). These international organizations were created by the U.S., which – albeit not almighty – continues to be the most influential actor in all of them. In fact, it is more than just an actor in this system, a *primus inter pares*. It is the custodian of the system. There is simply no other power on earth, which would be willing and able to guarantee the survival of this system. To the contrary, the rising powers Russia and China will do everything to exploit the system but, being authoritarian powers, they have no interest in the defence or even universalisation of its underlying principles. Even worse, many powerful regional actors, such as Iran, actively seek to undermine it.

As a liberal democracy whose prosperity is largely dependent on international trade, Germany has a vested interest in the maintenance of the system. The safety of trade routes, the reliability of contractual agreements, and the general peacefulness of international conduct are just some of the norms and commodities that are essential to Germany's success in the world. However, none of those norms and commodities are givens. They are the result of a system of rules that ensures a stable world order. Like in professional sports, rules alone do not suffice – they also need to be enforced. Germany, as the EU in general, does relatively little to do so. The bulk of the burden rests on U.S. shoulders. Tom Friedman once stated: “The hidden hand of the market will never work without the hidden fist of the U.S. military.” To be fair, the U.S. in turn benefits immensely from the system it upholds – but in relation to the necessary enforcement efforts, Germany gains more.

41 Brooks, Stephen G. / Wohlforth, William C. (2008): *World Out of Balance. International Relations and the Challenge of American Primacy*. Princeton. And: Lieber, Robert J. (2005): *The American Era. Power and Strategy for the 21st Century*. New York.

The argument is not about benefits, though. It is about the fact that the enforcer by definition has a different perception of world affairs than other actors. His schizophrenic role is simultaneously outside the game (as the enforcer) and inside the game (as one of various actors). This bears a special responsibility – and it also favours hypocrisy. Germany's task is to rein in the U.S. when it falls for the latter and to cut it some slack when it lives up to the former. Despite all the woolly rhetoric, the foreign policy of Germany and that of the U.S. cannot and should not be held to the same standards.

Implicitly, that is well understood by policymakers on both sides of the Atlantic. In fact, many of the troubles of the last eight years resulted from the U.S. abandoning the role of the system's custodian. Instead of defending the status quo and maintaining stability at all costs, the U.S. deliberately shook the whole system by overturning the regional subsystem of the Middle East. That is the true meaning of the Iraq war: the U.S. turned from a status quo power to a revolutionary power. With regard to the next American president, the German apostles of stability hope for a return of the U.S. to the role of the custodian. Although the U.S. since its founding has always had a revolutionary streak, this might very well happen. This brings us to the fourth reason why the transatlantic relationship might well rediscover its common purpose.

4. The U.S. has experienced the limits of its military power

All the arguments about the durability of American supremacy notwithstanding, the wars in Afghanistan and in Iraq in particular have taught the U.S. a bitter lesson. This harks back to the first insight about extreme views being discredited but it also has broader implications. An enormous military advantage does not automatically translate into political success. As had been the case in Vietnam – and this is one of the few instances where Vietnam and Iraq are truly in parallel – political ends prove elusive in spite of military preponderance.

This lesson of Vietnam was unlearned in the course of the 1990s; the talk of superpower and uni-polarity, while justified, obscured how complicated the relationship between military strength and political outcome is. The U.S. was and is the only superpower in a uni-polar system, but that does not mean that it can shape the world at will. This was the hubris of the Bush administration, reinforced by the shock and hurt of 9/11.

The experience of the limits of military power will not fundamentally change the U.S. approach to international relations. But it will hedge against the revolutionary tendency in the American spirit – and be it just because of force depletion and the erosion of public support and political will. As a result, the next president, although he will probably not make a U-turn on the traditional hegemonic policies, is likely to put more emphasis on the non-military tools of international affairs than Bush did during his first term. This offers the opportunity for Germany and European allies in general to meet him halfway.

5. Germany and the EU need to be more proactive in shaping the transatlantic partnership

The anxiety with which Germans follow the U.S. elections is indicative of a fundamental problem. Germans are anxious because they expect this election to determine the future of U.S. foreign policy as well as of the U.S.' attitude towards transatlantic relations in particular. Even though this is true it is only one half of the story. What is lacking is an understanding of the German and European roles in transatlantic affairs. Instead of always looking at Washington, simultaneously fearing and hoping for the next U.S. policy initiative, Germany would be well-advised to formulate a transatlantic agenda of its own. What is it Germans and Europeans want to achieve with the transatlantic partnership? Which problems do we find most pressing, and which common, real-world solutions do we suggest?

Currently, the U.S. political system is somewhat paralyzed because of the elections (which seem to drag on for an eternity). This will remain so throughout the transition period between Election Day and the inauguration of the new president on January 20, 2009 – and might well continue a few months longer until all political appointees have settled in. This timeframe is a window of opportunity for Germany and the EU. We should use it to present our coherent transatlantic strategy to the next president instead of waiting for him to come up with an agenda of his own. Such a proactive approach towards transatlantic relations would have numerous advantages but three are most notable. First, it would make it much harder for those in Washington belittling the role of Europe to reassert themselves. Second, it would increase the chance for an American policy, which incorporates European goals and strategies. Third, it would strengthen support for transatlantic policy among the German and wider European public. This last point is the most important one. As we see in the case of Afghanistan, it is very difficult to sustain public approval of a policy, which in its entirety seems to be designed and initiated by a foreign power. Because Germany is largely seen as reacting to policies decided upon in Washington or NATO headquarters, it is so difficult for German policy-

makers to forcefully defend these policies. Thus, in the interest of a vital transatlantic relationship, Germany and the EU must become less reactive and more active players.

European disunity and German reluctance to step up to the plate, however, prevent this transformation. On Iraq, for instance, Germans and Europeans agree that they do not favour an immediate U.S. withdrawal if it leaves the country and the region in turmoil. We also agree that we are, for various reasons, not willing to engage militarily in Iraq. This, however, is not a forward-looking strategy. A comprehensive German/European plan regarding economic and political support for Iraq could be the first step to changing the dynamics of the transatlantic relationship.

Conclusion

No matter who will be the next president of the U.S., core differences between the foreign policies of Germany and the U.S. will remain. The appropriateness of the use of force, the merits of multilateralism, and the importance (and proper method) of democracy promotion are all contentious issues in the German-American relationship. Nonetheless, there are more common values and overlapping interests than divisive issues between Germany and the U.S. This sets transatlantic relations apart from any other partnership in the world. The next president will call on Germany to act accordingly – and the chancellor should ask the same in return. Both countries need strong transatlantic co-operation on issues such as trade, Iran, Afghanistan, environmental protection, and many more topics. The greatest challenge, however, will be the recreation of a lasting liberal international system which incorporates and ultimately transforms the rising powers, particularly Brazil, Russia, India and China. This task is essential to the security and prosperity of the West. If it is to be achieved, Germany and the U.S. must overcome the narcissism of small differences and revitalize their partnership. As a first precondition for this, Germans should stop dreaming of a “better” America or the feeble “benefits” of a multi-polar world order and instead work with the partner at hand.

France and the United States of America

By Daniela Schwarzer

France's relationship with the U.S. has occupied researchers and political commentators for decades, albeit with varying intensity. With the arrival of Nicolas Sarkozy as President of the French Republic in 2007 and the conclusion of the U.S. electoral season in 2008, the recent and future evolution of bilateral relations is likely to attract particular attention. President Sarkozy has announced a "*rupture*" with the Chirac era (from 1995 to 2007) including a thorough review of French foreign and security policy. This article investigates in how far transatlantic relations are concerned in this review. This is not only an important bilateral issue. As the prospects of both the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) and NATO lie at crossroads, French policies have the potential to shape the future architecture for a European security and defence policy, the nature of the NATO-EU-relationship – and possibly also the future of NATO itself. This article argues that while there seems to be a considerable degree of stability in French foreign and security policy, the parameters, especially those set or influenced by the U.S., have changed. Under Nicolas Sarkozy, France still pursues its traditional objective to increase the strength of the EU in order to counter-balance the U.S. (while also putting more emphasis on transatlantic cooperation than France did under Jacques Chirac), but it also sees the need to fill a gap caused by a perceived strategic reorientation of the U.S. with a stronger European engagement in foreign and security affairs.

Characteristics of France's Traditional Security and Political Relationship with the U.S.

The bilateral relationship between France and the U.S. has traditionally been characterized by both competition and cooperation. Since the end of World War II, the balance between competition and cooperation has varied in the context of the evolving world order and its enshrined power relationships.

Ironically, the similarities between both countries' foreign-policy approaches have put them into competition at various times in recent history.⁴² Both countries traditionally pursue a universalist approach, and when seeking to spread their values such as human rights or

42 Haglund, David (2000): 'Feuding Hillbillies' of the West? A Modest Inquiry into the Significance and Sources of Franco-American Conflict in International Security. In: Haglund, David: The France-US Leadership Race: Closely Watched Allies. Kingston, p. 19-43.

democracy abroad, both consider themselves as the most qualified and legitimate actors to do so. At the same time, they have repeatedly diverged over the question of how to pursue these objectives.

France, though much smaller and less influential than the U.S., especially after the loss of its colonies and after World War II, has traditionally sought to establish a multi-polar world order which would leave enough margin of manoeuvre for French foreign policy (unilaterally or in a European framework). During bi-polarity of the Cold War, France could act according to its own principles and interests with relative freedom, partly free-riding on the U.S.'s security provision. Especially under President Charles de Gaulle, it constantly pursued its goal of decision-making autonomy and the perceived need for an independent defence capacity. This happened with a strong focus on France's own capacities and, in later decades, an increasing interest in cooperation within the European framework. The decision under President de Gaulle in 1966 to leave NATO's command structures and to build the independent *force de frappe* (nuclear strike force) were important steps to increase the scope of French foreign and security policy and to increase independence from outside (and above all U.S.-) protection. Meanwhile, even in the 1960s under de Gaulle and up to today, France's relationship with NATO and hence transatlantic cooperation in the field of security was never fully abandoned.⁴³ During the Cold War, France never questioned the role of NATO in responding to the Soviet threat. It thus combined its unilateral foreign policy approach with the existing multilateral framework, without giving up the pursuit of a multi-polar world order.

With the end of the Cold War and with the arrival of new security threats and risks, the structural conditions have fundamentally changed. Unilateral action has become increasingly difficult for France. Meanwhile, in the second half of the 1990s, France felt increasingly threatened by the U.S.' *hyperpuissance*, a hegemonic power with no counterweight, as Hubert Védrine put it in a speech in the French National Assembly on June 26, 1997.

As France hence still pursues its long-defined policy objective of creating a multi-polar world order, NATO and European cooperation in the field of security and defence policy have regained importance. When President Chirac was elected in 1995, he changed the tone

43 Hofmann, Stephanie / Kempin, Ronja (2008): Through the Transatlantic Looking Glass: France and the U.S. – yet Another Special Relationship? In: Peter Schmidt (Ed.): A Hybrid Relationship. Transatlantic Security Cooperation beyond NATO. Frankfurt a.M., p. 189-199, here p. 192-193.

towards the U.S. and with regard to NATO cooperation. He argued for a stronger French engagement within the Atlantic Alliance, while never giving up the objective of increasing European autonomy in the field of defence and security policy. In 1995, France resumed its participation in NATO's Military Committee. This step was crucial as, for the first time, "France was bringing official discourse on, and de facto activity in the Alliance more into accord with each other."⁴⁴

At the same time, France became increasingly aware of the fact that it needed to cooperate with European partners in order to be able to pursue its goal of creating a multi-polar world order. With the Saint-Malo agreement of 1998, France together with the United Kingdom laid the foundations for the creation of the European Security and Defence Policy, which from Chirac's point of view served the objective of creating a multi-polar world order. Franco-German cooperation (e.g. the Franco-German brigade which was later turned into the Eurocorps) meanwhile contributed practically to bring forward cooperation in European security affairs.

In practice, France not only needs to act with the U.S. in multilateral security institutions such as NATO, but also needs the support of Washington to push for its preference for a strong European security and defence policy. Not all European partners have been willing to follow France down that road. The UK but also Scandinavian and Central European countries, as well as Germany, have refused to position ESDP as a countervailing force to the U.S. This is more than a question of political rhetoric, and has had practical consequences: for instance France had to accept that the Eurocorps, in case of a military crisis in Europe, should be placed under NATO command.

Developments under the Presidency of George W. Bush

In the days after September 11, 2001, France strongly supported Washington's reactions to the terrorist attacks. Then-President Chirac ordered the French secret services to collaborate closely with U.S. intelligence, and created the Alliance Base in Paris, a joint-intelligence service center charged with pursuing the Bush administration's "War on Terrorism".

But later, France decidedly opposed the U.S. plan to invade Iraq, just like Gerhard Schröder, then German Chancellor, had done even before. On March 11, 2003, along with Germany,

44 Ibid, p. 195.

China and Russia, France opposed a United Nations resolution authorizing the American invasion of Iraq. French Foreign Minister Dominique de Villepin harshly criticised the Bush administration's policies in the UN Security Council. This dispute did not remain solely on the political level. In the U.S. in particular, there were public initiatives to boycott French goods in retaliation of perceived French hostility towards America. Some U.S. media commentators waged anti-French campaigns and public opinion turned against France. In 2006, only one in six Americans considered France to be an ally. Meanwhile, the Bush administration's policies increased suspicion against the U.S. in the French population as in turn did media reports on anti-French actions by U.S. citizens.

Despite the transatlantic rifts over Iraq, Paris and Washington continued to cooperate in monitoring and disrupting terrorist groups. France also processed numerous U.S. requests for information under the Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty. Among other issues, both countries cooperated when dealing with the so-called "Cedar Revolution" in Lebanon, which saw the withdrawal of Syrian troops and cooperated on crafting several UN resolutions. In September 2004, France and the U.S. co-sponsored the Security Council resolution 1559 which called for full withdrawal of Syrian forces, a free and fair electoral process, and disbanding and disarmament of all Lebanese and non-Lebanese militias. Both countries also cooperated within the Framework of the Middle-East Quartet on the Israel-Palestinian conflict.

Furthermore, Paris and Washington continued to entertain close economic relationships, which have not seriously been influenced in recent years despite the strongly mediated boycott of French products in the U.S. The U.S. are France's sixth most important trading partner, while France ranks as the U.S.' eighth trading partner. On average, over one billion Dollars in commercial transactions take place between France and the U.S. every day. In 2007, trade between both countries in goods and services totalled 99 billion Dollars. The main U.S. exports to France are, among other items, industrial chemicals, aircraft and engines. Principal French exports to the U.S. are aircraft and engines, beverages, electrical equipment, chemicals, cosmetics, and luxury products. The U.S. is the top destination for French international investments while the U.S. is the strongest foreign investor in France.⁴⁵

Sarkozy's Readjustment of French Security Policy

The French presidential elections of 2007 have re-set the parameters for a further

45 State Department Background Note on France, January 1, 2008.

improvement in Franco-American relations. Nicolas Sarkozy, who was elected as French president in May 2007, has so far positioned himself as an “occidental atlanticist” pursuing a close alliance with the U.S.⁴⁶ In order to make it clear to the public on both sides of the Atlantic that he would end his predecessor’s “anti-Americanis”, Sarkozy strongly mediated his 2007 summer holiday stay in the U.S. and the visit to George W. Bush at his summer residence in Kennebunkport. But the will to improve transatlantic relations in such an ostentatious way cannot disguise the fact that the focus of French security policy does not lie on transatlantic co-operation so much as on reinforcement of the EU’s security and defence policy.

According to the French White Book on Security Policy, France expects a (relatively) diminished U.S. capacity to shape global events and points out the shift in the American focus from Europe towards the Middle East and Asia.⁴⁷ This strategic reorientation is yet another element reinforcing the French quest for greater European investment in military and civilian capabilities, which would allow the EU to act independently in crisis prevention, intervention, stabilisation and reconstruction. France’s recent push for more European Defence cooperation comes ten years after the Franco-British Saint Malo summit, which was key to the launch of ESDP. But today, France focuses more on concrete capabilities rather than on setting up EU security institutions. Sarkozy pushes the EU to finally implement the 60.000-strong EU intervention force decided upon in 2003 (so-called Helsinki Headline Goals). Furthermore, France seeks to establish specific capabilities, such as transport aircraft, a new generation of military satellites, and military command structures in Brussels. Sarkozy also wants the EU to fund a bigger share of military operations jointly rather than from national budgets, but also pressures his fellow EU heads of state and government to increase defence spending, especially in the field of research and innovation.

France’s recent focus on Europe may in part still be explained by its quest for a multi-polar world order. But it is no longer predominantly minds to “counter-balance the hegemon.” Instead, it perceives a need to fill the gap, which the shift of American interests away from Europe and its neighbouring regions has created. A further driver of the pursuit of greater European cooperation and integration in the field of security policy is the fact that French foreign and security policy is facing severe domestic budgetary constraints. Sarkozy has

46 Gresh, Alain (2008): OTAN, Proche-Orient, Afrique enquête sur le virage de la diplomatie française. In: *Le Monde Diplomatique*, July 1, 2008.

47 Mallet, Jean-Claude (2008): *Défense et Sécurité Nationale: Le Livre Blanc*. Paris, Odile Jacob, June 2008, p. 99, <http://lesrapports.ladocumentationfrancaise.fr/BRP/084000341/0000.pdf>

announced a reduction of 26.000 soldiers from today's army of 157.000 by the year 2015. While he has promised that this will not degrade operational commitments in Afghanistan, Africa, the Balkans and Lebanon, some French generals have (even publicly) pointed out that cutting down national defence capacities so radically would endanger France's ability to act. Some even have pointed out that Sarkozy's promise of May 2008 to dispatch 700 additional soldiers to Afghanistan might overstretch the army. Furthermore, they voiced fears that the country is losing ground to the UK and to the U.S: "We are abandoning Europe's military leadership to the British who, everyone knows, have a special relationship with the U.S. From now on, France will play in the same league as Italy."⁴⁸

The French president always links his quest for strengthened EU defence capabilities to a strong transatlantic orientation. On several occasions Sarkozy has repeated his intent to fully "re-integrate" France into NATO military structures, which de Gaulle left in 1966 and where French military staff are less present than, for instance, their German or British colleagues. He first announced this possibility in an interview in September 2007 and demanded two things in return: American acceptance of an independent European defence capability and a leading French role in NATO's command structures. He repeated the theme in his address to Congress in November 2007, where he called on "the Alliance to evolve concurrently with the development and strengthening of a European defence."

In order to win French public opinion for this step, Sarkozy used several speeches in France to point out the importance of the Alliance. Today, 62% of the French polled think that NATO is still essential to the country's security. 34% do not deem it to be essential. Hence, the attitude about NATO has roughly recovered to pre-Iraq war levels. But the actual implication of France in the transatlantic alliance is generally not pointed out by French officials. In general, the public is not aware that France is the fifth largest financial contributor to NATO's budget and that it provided (in spring 2008) 2000 military personnel to NATO's Kosovo Force and 1500 to ISAF in Afghanistan (with another 700 promised by Sarkozy).

The criticism (both from the left and right of the political spectrum) of France's intended re-integration into NATO may surface in spring 2009 ahead of NATO's 60th anniversary summit at which Sarkozy intends to complete this step. Sarkozy stated several times that strengthening European defence is a precondition to increasing France's presence in Nato. But

48 Anonymous article by leading military staff signed Groupe Surcouf (2008): Livre Blanc sur la défense: une espérance déçue. In: Le Figaro, June 18, 2008.

politically, the mechanism also works in the other direction: in order to win the support of Washington and of some “transatlanticist” EU member states such as the United Kingdom and some of the Central and Eastern European countries, Sarkozy had to send a clear signal that the French quest for a strengthened ESDP is not a move against the U.S. (in the sense of counterbalancing it), but part of a larger deal which involves a renewed French commitment to cooperation within NATO.

French moves towards NATO and the ambitions Sarkozy formulated for the future development of ESDP have so far received highest political support from Washington. The American ambassador to the Alliance, Victoria Nuland, declared in February 2008:

“You will think this is strange, a little suspicious – to have the U.S. Ambassador to NATO come to Paris to say that one of the most important things French leaders can do for global security is to strengthen and build the capacities of the EU. [...] An ESDP with only soft power is not enough. [...] we need a stronger EU, we need a stronger NATO and if Afghanistan has taught us anything, we need a stronger, more seamless relationship between them. [...] In Washington, leaders of all stripes are calling for more, not less Europe, and applauding President Sarkozy’s appeal for the EU and NATO to ‘march hand in hand’.”⁴⁹

The U.S. Secretary of Defence, Robert Gates, also argued for a “complementary NATO-EU relationship” at the February 2008 Munich Security Conference. Bush echoed the support for further EU integration at the NATO summit in Bukarest in April 2008. In return, France announced it would send another 700 soldiers for NATO’s mission in Afghanistan. This was as much a reconciliatory signal especially to Washington as it was a strategic move of France to strengthen its position within the NATO.

French Public Opinion and the Transatlantic Relationship

It was probably the pro-American stance taken by President Sarkozy, the welcoming reaction in Washington and, in general, a less aggressive foreign policy rhetoric of the U.S. that has led to some shift in French public opinion on transatlantic relations. Public opinion in France on the U.S. and on transatlantic cooperation had ditched during the run-up to the Iraq war. But

49 Nuland, Victoria, United States Permanent Representative to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) (2008): Speech to Presse Club and AmCham Paris, France, February 22, 2008.

in June 2008, 33 % of the people polled for the Transatlantic Trends⁵⁰ said that relations between the U.S. and Europe had recently improved. In previous years (2005-2007), only 10 % to 17 % had thought there was an improvement in relations.

Despite efforts of both governments, figures have still not reached the level of support and interest of pre-Iraq war times. Asked to rate their feelings towards the U.S. on a scale from 0 (very cold) to 100 (very warm), the French polled gave an average of 47. The feelings towards the U.S. have thus not reached to values of around 60, which the country held in 2002 before the start of the Iraq war. The French, like other Europeans, have been largely critical not only about the war in Iraq, but also about the U.S. assault on international treaty regimes such as the Kyoto Protocol, the International Criminal Court, the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and the Biological Weapons Convention. The treatment of terrorist suspects, for instance in Guantanamo Bay, or the Abu Ghraib prison scandal further upset the public and made a growing value gap apparent.

Opinions about the Bilateral Relationship after the U.S. Presidential Elections

It is safe to say that public opinion in France in general assumes that anything is better than George W. Bush. The acting U.S. president has a particular bad standing in French public opinion: in 2008, 87% of the French polled disapprove of the way he is handling international affairs. This number has even increased from the times when the war in Iraq was fought.

In contrast, 61 % of the people polled expect transatlantic relations to get better after the U.S. elections. The opinion about future transatlantic relations thus strongly depends on the presumed future U.S. president. The Democrat Barack Obama is seen as a candidate who stands for a foreign policy approach which is rather compatible with French goals: 85% of those polled hold favourable views on him. The view on the Republican candidate John McCain is unfavourable among 63 % of the polled French.

Today, public opinion in France is still divided over the question whether France should co-operate with the U.S. 60 % of the French polled think that the U.S. and the EU have enough common values to co-operate on international problems, while 38% consider this co-operation to be impossible. French voters would like the future U.S. president and the European leaders

⁵⁰ If not stated otherwise, all polling data used in the remainder of this text is taken from: German Marshall Fund of the United States: Transatlantic Trends 2008, <http://www.transatlantictrends.org/trends>. Data for 2008 is based on interviews conducted in June 2008.

to co/operate on climate change (30%), to help solve the Middle East conflict (20%), international economic problems (19%) and to fight international terrorism (18 %).

French public opinion meanwhile also backs Sarkozy's efforts to increase the role of the EU in international affairs. 71% of the French think that the EU should exert a strong leadership in world affairs. 68% percent meanwhile think that it is undesirable that Washington exerts strong leadership in world affairs. Public opinion seems to remain in line with the traditional French approach of favouring a multi-polar world order with a considerable role to play for the EU.

Perspectives for the Political Relationship

The U.S. elections in November 2008 offer the opportunity for a further and possibly long-term improvement in transatlantic and Franco-American relations. Neither Barack Obama nor John McCain is likely to abandon the U.S. foreign policy tradition of assertive leadership. But the question is in how far they will combine it with openness for multilateral co-operation, which is sought by France and other EU members. The transatlantic relationship will also be crucially shaped by the strategic decision of the new U.S. administration on whether to continue cooperation with the EU in world affairs, or whether they will seek a division of labour according to the principle "Europe for the Europeans, the rest of the world for the U.S."»⁵¹

The future U.S. president will also have to decide whether he supports France's attempt to fully re-integrate into NATO's military command structures and in how far he encourages the strengthening of ESDP. This is of course not a bilateral matter between both countries. But like in 1997, when Jacques Chirac's effort to fully re-integrate France into NATO failed, a cooperative approach by the U.S. and France will be key to its success and hence to the implementation of Sarkozy's announced foreign policy agenda. Support by the new president would probably make it much easier for France to win countries with a strong atlanticist security orientation for this move. The current economic crisis in the U.S. and the budgetary pressure resulting from it make it rather more likely that Washington will continue to put pressure on EU member states to step up their defence efforts. So far, Sarkozy in this regard has not acted against the U.S. interest. Even though he set clear limits to French defence expenditure, he regularly requests fellow EU member states (apart from the United Kingdom)

51 Heisbourg, François (2001): La France, l'Europe et les Etats-Unis: L'Aggiornamento des relations transatlantiques. In: AFRI, Vol III, p. 32-48, here p. 43, <http://www.afri-ct.org/IMG/pdf/heisb2001.pdf>

to invest more in this area.⁵² While the overall defence expenditure is not likely to increase in the EU, the French proposals for further integration may, after a necessary period of restructuring and additional investment, make the EU a more efficient partner to the U.S.

Regarding the disputes over Iraq, this chapter is likely to be closed after the U.S. elections – not matter what the outcome will be. If Obama as president implements the announced withdrawal from the country, the issue is likely to disappear from the transatlantic agenda. Even if McCain keeps the troops in Iraq for a longer period of time, this will not particularly affect Franco-American relations. Iraq has become a less salient issue in Europe and in France.

However, some tensions may arise if the future U.S. president asks for a stronger European, including French, engagement in Afghanistan. The Democratic candidate Obama has already suggested that the EU should increase its presence there. It is unlikely that France will further intensify its engagement after the recent new commitments, both because public opinion has turned critical and because the resources for further deployment of French troops abroad are scarce. Meanwhile, Sarkozy could use eventual requests for a stronger European engagement to reinforce his case for more efforts in ESDP.

Regardless of who will be the next American president and how far the EU will push co-operation and integration in the field of ESDP under the French EU Council presidency, it remains crucial for future relations between the U.S. and France or the U.S. and the EU to re-establish a relationship based on openness, understanding and cooperation. This refers not only to the need to pursue a common policy with regard to the fight against terrorism, conflict resolution and prevention in the Middle East, and towards Russia and neighbouring regions such as the Caucasus. The mayor challenge for transatlantic dialogue and co-operation is the need to re-shape the global architecture for security and defence policy including a consensual reform of NATO and the emergence of independent EU defence structures.

52 See for instance Sarkozy's speech to the French ambassadors (2007): Allocation à l'occasion de la conférence des Ambassadeurs, Elysée Palace, August 27, 2007. http://www.elysee.fr/elysee/elysee.fr/francais/interventions/2007/aout/allocation_a_l_occasion_de_la_conference_des_ambassadeurs.79272.html

Transatlantic Relations after George W. Bush – A British Perspective

By Christopher Coker

One of the enduring problems of the Anglo-American partnership (Britain's "special" ally, America's "closest" ally) is caught by Ian McEwan's novel, "The Innocent" (1990) with its ironic alternative title "The Special Relationship." The Englishman Leonard Marnham and the American Bob Glass are working together on *Operation Gold* in 1955/1956 – the construction of a tunnel under East Berlin as a joint CIA/MI6 venture that was undertaken in real life. The work is fraught with mutual irritation. The British find the Americans exasperating in their self-confidence and ignorance. "What's worse, they won't learn, they won't be told. It's just how they are." The Americans, for their part, find the British amateurish and proud of their amateurism. "They're so busy being gentlemen."

Judging a historical moment is clearly a delicate matter when two or more countries are involved. How do you get the most out of someone else's historic moment? Clearly, by being useful. With the Lend-lease program in 1940, the U.S. took part in Britain's last moment in history. With the Atlantic Charter in August 1941, Britain served notice that it was about to take part in America's. True to their first principles, the British have always seen their transatlantic relationship in historical terms. True to their own principles, the Americans have been far more pragmatic. "The relationship was not particularly special in my day," reflected Henry Kissinger a few years ago. "It was normal." Britain was important because "it made itself so useful."

The British were fortunate once again that they could take part in America's post Cold War unipolar moment. This played to Britain's one great strength for the first 15 years of this era: it had enough military power to be useful to the U.S. In Mainz in May 1989, President Bush senior had called for a special partnership with Germany and Japan to shape the new world order. But Japan soon went into recession and Germany spent its energies on reconstituting itself after unification and neither country had the military forces that were needed to forge that new order, either in the peacekeeping missions of the 1990s or the wars that followed September 11, 2001. Britain had. For a time Americans even began to talk of the "Anglo-sphere", a circle of countries within the West, all English-speaking including Britain and its former dominions such as Canada and Australia, and such "honorary" English speaking

countries in the “new Europe” such as Poland. Tom Friedman in one of his columns for *The Washington Post* produced an amusing story that caught the mood of the times. Phone NATO, he wrote, and you would get a recorded message: “Thank you for showing interest in our organisation. If you have a touch dial phone please exercise one of the following options: If you would like to join the organisation, dial 1; if you would like to join Partnership for Peace, dial 2; if you would like to take part in a NATO sponsored peacekeeping mission, dial 3. But if you would like to fight a war please stay on the line and an English-speaking operator will be with you shortly.”

In Tony Blair Britain had a Prime Minister who unlike his European partners shared the American vision of the future: one that believed it belonged to Anglo-American values that could be traced all the way back to the ideas of John Locke. The future would be the realisation of Locke’s liberal vision. On the eve of taking office Blair told an audience in Bridgewater Hall, Manchester: “Century upon century it has been the destiny of Britain to lead other nations. That should not be a destiny that is part of our history. It should be part of our future. We are a leader of nations or nothing”. During the ten years that Blair presided over *Operation Desert Fox* (1998), the Kosovo War (1999), the deployment of troops to Sierra Leone (2000), the attack on Afghanistan following 9/11 (2002), and the controversial war in Iraq (2003-07), his foreign policy was cast in the language of values rather than the national interest.

Blair reiterated this liberal agenda in his valedictory speech before an international audience gathered together by *The Economist*. Indeed, he left office insisting that Britain should be a player, not a spectator in all significant international issues. He stated:

“The critical point is that we, Britain, should be closely involved in all these issues, because in the end they will affect our own future. And the agenda constructed should be about our values – freedom, democracy, responsibility to others, but also justice and fairness.”

It seemed obvious to Blair that nothing could withstand the force of the West’s intellectual example any more than the force of western arms.

But ten years later the British find themselves exhausted and over-stretched. Their forces in Iraq achieved a messy outcome in Basra by applying a Northern Ireland peace-building model

that had little applicability to Iraqi circumstances. In Afghanistan with a death toll over 100 the British army, under-equipped and under-resourced, is involved in the heaviest fighting it has experienced since the Korean war. The eventual outcome is likely to be equally inconclusive, and to stretch out for years. British military power is becoming a quickly depreciating asset. In 2007 and 2008 some 20.000 members of the military left the service (the largest exodus in a single year). To be sure, the Americans too are having difficulty both recruiting and retaining their military personnel – they too find themselves overstretched.

Even the country's much touted expertise in counter-insurgency has been brought into question. Far from being amateurs, out of depth in unfamiliar political terrain, as British critics patronisingly alleged at the start of both campaigns, US commanders in Iraq – and to a lesser extent Afghanistan – are thoroughly versed in local politics, adroit in negotiation and effective in hitting the right targets. Britain by comparison is only able to field far smaller contingents in each country with less equipment and more frequent rotations. The shoe is now on the other foot.

The British Dilemma

Since 9/11 the Americans have also had to take into account a new factor in their relationship with their “closest” ally: the extent to which any British government can count upon domestic support in its foreign and security policy. Despite the tradition (as Americans called it at the time) of British secret service agents being “off side” and in the pockets of Moscow (*Operation Gold* was betrayed to the Russians by the British liaison officer George Blake) the Americans could always count on British public opinion. This is not the case in the War on Terror anymore.

The U.S. produces no suicide bombers of its own, although it has its fair share of home grown terrorists such as Tim McVeigh and the Unabomber. Neither of these however, were on the cast of the “Long War.” What worries Americans instead is the “ethnic stranger”, particularly those who are Spanish-speaking and deemed likely to bring with them in their suitcase the work ethic of the Third World. Despite the anxiety in Britain about the number of asylum seekers and immigrants, it is not the ethnic stranger but the “ethical stranger” who is deemed to constitute the real danger. For the ethical tie between citizens, which makes possible the civic order is ultimately far more important than ethnicity. Unfortunately, when the ethnic stranger becomes an ethical stranger (a stranger to the civic order of which he is part) and, more important, when he insists upon his own estrangement, then the state faces a dilemma. It

is at that point that it confronts the threat of Rousseau's "foreigners among citizens", by which he meant the citizens opposed to the social contract that sustains civil society. For the ethical stranger, whatever his social or ethnic provenance, is by definition an anti-social citizen.

The challenge posed by the 7/7 London bombers was that they saw themselves as members of an oppressed and humiliated body. In their martyrdom tapes they claimed they were acting to revenge their Muslim brothers in Iraq and Palestine. They went about killing their fellow citizens to avenge "brothers in faith" they had never met. Such is the power of one "imagined community" (the Islamic brotherhood) over another (the United Kingdom). 600 British citizens (the security services now admit) have been trained in al-Qaeda training camps, and 3000 are under 24-hour surveillance. It would be a grim day, of course, were Muslim and non-Muslim citizens in the United Kingdom to understand opposition to each other as constitutive of themselves.

This is a risk many western societies now run and they are haunted by the fear that through their own actions (not least in foreign relations) they may even invite it. The link between British policy in Iraq and the London bombings (2005) was confirmed by both Al-Qaeda's deputy leader, Al-Zawahiri and Britain's Joint Terrorism Analysis Centre. It was in anticipation of such an attack that a year earlier the Foreign Office had set up a new programme: "Engaging with the Islamic World" which included "Outreach"-programmes designed to explain British policy to a domestic audience.

Only once before the British state has had to take into account the fault lines running through society when in 1919 London dock workers refused to load a ship called the *Jolly George* with arms for Poland in its war against Soviet Russia. A threat by the Trades Union Congress to order a general strike forced the government to suspend arms shipments altogether. But class divisions, however real, were never translated into foreign policy choices. Even George Blake was not representative of the working classes. Is this true of the multicultural society Britain has become? Do the ethnic fault lines running through Bradford and Birmingham now pose a danger to national security? Particularly worrying for the British government was the arrest in February 2007 of nine young British Muslims from the Birmingham area who were accused of planning to kidnap and decapitate British Muslim soldiers who had returned from Afghanistan.

In short, there is a crucial difference between the “ethnic stranger” that the U.S. fears and the “ethical stranger” that the Europeans may already confront. It complicates state-building in Afghanistan and Iraq whether the British are willing to acknowledge the fact or not. The Americans believe they are engaged in a war; many British believe that they are trying to prevent one from breaking out at home, which is why Gordon Brown’s first act as prime minister was to ban any reference to the “War on Terror”. By contrast, President Bush delivered a revealing speech in November 2005 in which he told the American people: “Our troops are fighting terrorists in Iraq so that you will not have to face them here at home.” Britain cannot keep terrorism at bay in this manner. Its suicide bombers are already in position.

All of which translates back into a cybernetic feedback loop. Quite understandably, we may all fear stolen nuclear weapons, sarin gas and anthrax bombs, but it is the old-fashioned bombs in automobiles and trains, what Mike Davis calls “the brutal hardware and quotidian workhorses of urban terrorism,” which do the most damage psychologically. For even the most law-abiding British citizen is beginning to question whether his or her own government should actually be putting them at even greater risk by any further military adventures either in the Middle East or in North-West Asia.

Taken as a whole, all the issues discussed above are inter-related – which is what makes them so critical. Declining domestic support for Britain’s special relationship with America is reinforced by the perceived danger, which British citizens see themselves courting as a result of American (and British) policies abroad. Most British Muslims actually do not see British policy as islamophobic but they don’t think the same of American policy (an irony, of course, since the majority of American Muslims supports the war on terror). As these issues intersect it is likely that the British will move, consciously or not, towards a more European position (the position of Merkel’s Germany, and Sarkozy’s France).

The Post-Bush World

So what is likely to happen in the Anglo-American relationship when Bush departs the political scene? In manoeuvring for major advantages the British will have three options.

First option: Binding.

Traditionally the best way of winning the support of the strongest country in the world has been to bind oneself to it. This was the British preference after 1945 and it explains the

extraordinary growth of multilateral institutions between 1947 and 1950, which Britain and the U.S. put together in the immediate aftermath of World War II. It is this multilateral regime which still survives and which the British would like to strengthen.

The problem with binding is that the dominant state does not always wish to be bound. The problem with friends, wrote Henrik Ibsen, was that not only do they do little for you – they also prevent you from doing much for yourself. One of the reasons the U.S. has trouble with fixed coalitions, as opposed to coalitions of the willing, is that they are seen to deny it the flexibility, which it now has as the only remaining superpower. Fitting the coalition to the mission makes a great deal more sense in the post-Cold War world than it did in the Cold War era. In the security realm the U.S. has interests that others do not necessarily share and responsibilities that might be jeopardised were it to sign up to institutions such as the International Criminal Court (ICC).

Wilsonianism will remain the predominant American foreign policy ideology in the new century. There is a difference, however, as Max Boot suggests, between “soft” Wilsonians and “hard” Wilsonians. Hard Wilsonians (in the spirit of Woodrow Wilson himself) are reluctant to think of countries as allies when the countries concerned not only can do little for the U.S. but are inclined to prevent it from doing much for itself. This is why in 1917 Wilson insisted that the U.S. was “associated” with, not allied to, the *Entente* powers. Soft Wilsonians, with a greater interest in value-based rather than interest-based alliances, tend to accept the constraints of being bound more willingly. The Bush administration clearly made plain its preference for “associates” rather than “partners” or “allies” although on one occasion in the run up to the invasion of Iraq it did defer to Blair in the search for a second resolution of the United Nations Security Council.

The next administration will evince an interest in a looser NATO – a global partnership – or what John McCain calls a “League of Democracies.” This also appeals to the Democrats. If the purpose of NATO is no longer territorial defence, as two Washington analysts write who are closely associated with the party, but bringing together countries with similar values to combat global problems, then the alliance no longer needs an exclusively transatlantic Charter. The idea has been strongly opposed by the French who (somewhat ironically, perhaps) are strongly opposed to diluting the West into a “vague ensemble.” It is ironic, of course, because the British too will lose if that is NATO’s future: the alliance will lose its Anglo-American “atlanticist” core.

Second Option: Bonding

In a unipolar world perhaps the only real room for manoeuvre that an ally can gain is through personalising politics at critical times when nothing and no-one can be taken for granted. Bonding with the president is a way of gaining a stake in Washington, and even a voice in the inner corridors of power. If an ally becomes so indispensable or loyal then power may, at times, be shared. This has been Sarkozy's policy since taking office; he has sought to build a unique Franco-American partnership to replace the Anglo-American one at a time when Anglo-American differences on policy in Afghanistan and Iraq have soured relations between the two countries. Whether any political leader has derived any material benefit from the policy is hotly debated. Bonding depends very much on events, on single issue politics (such as the war on terrorism). And because it is not systemic (it is contingent in this case on personal factors) it may have limited appeal.

And there is another problem with bonding. Anti-Americanism has become part of electoral politics in various parts of the world as it did in Germany in 2002. Anti-Americanism is on the rise in Britain. Opposition to the U.S. and its policies has often helped leaders be elected or re-elected. Leaders considered too uncritical of the U.S. are particularly at risk as Tony Blair found to his cost. How this will translate into state strategies in the future remains an open question – but it may well be an important question in determining Anglo-American relations in the years to come.

Third option: Balancing

Balancing a country, particularly within an alliance, has been the tried and tested method of the French since 1966 when they left NATO's integrated military command. Balance of power politics can be played within coalitions, as well as between them, and indeed has been the preferred French response for the last 30 years. Tying the U.S. into multilateral institutions was another way of balancing its power and channelling its power for allies' purposes. But the French took balancing much further in the Cold War years in terms of force deployments and non-participation in NATO's command structure.

Balancing within an alliance is quite different from balancing outside it. It takes a particular form: that of counter-weighting. As Chris Patton, the former EU commissioner for external relations, argues: "We [Europeans] have to, as football coaches say, dig deeper [...] if we're going to be a credible ally and an occasional counterweight." The progress that has been made already towards a new European Defence Agency with Britain, France and Germany

considering the development of joint “battle groups” for peacekeeping operations may look like classic gesture politics. The planning cell may be a small shadow of NATO’s – but it may also mark the beginning of a first attempt to produce a counterweight to the U.S., an initiative which may meet with some British support if (as some experts expect) only the tone, not the substance of American policy may change after President Bush’s departure. Britain like America has entered another historical era with what consequences for their relationship history itself has yet to pronounce.

This is what makes the American elections so critical. Under a President McCain the consequences are likely to be more immediate. Under a President Obama, they are likely to be the same, but to manifest themselves over a longer period of time. All of which is to conclude that it doesn’t really matter – in the mid-term – who is elected in 2008. The special relationship is unlikely to be the same again.

Polish-U.S. Relations since 2001: High Hopes – Low Yields?

By Bartosz Wiśniewski

Poland may be a newcomer to the transatlantic community, yet it cannot be said that she has settled for a rank-and-file membership. Rather, Warsaw has thus far followed a visible pro-American path. An ever closer relationship with the United States was an important factor in Poland's policy choices on numerous occasions – culminating in 2003 with the decision to back the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq – earning her both condemnation and, probably to a lesser extent, praise among European partners. Still, this course has enjoyed the support of virtually all Polish governments since 1989 and came to be regarded, at a certain point, to be one of the most significant achievements of Polish foreign and security policy. The recent agreement to host an element of the planned U.S. ballistic missile defence, accompanied by a political declaration intended to reinforce the bilateral security cooperation, might suggest that the relationship between Warsaw and Washington is as close as ever. While such an assertion would undoubtedly be true, it could also run the risk of missing many nuances that linger in the background of Polish-U.S. relations. Given the upcoming change in the White House – be it a *quasi*-revolution or a mere face-lifting (no malicious ageism implied!) – it seems perfectly reasonable, then, to ask: “how did we get to this point” and, even more importantly, “where do we go next” as far as this relationship is concerned.

Setting the Stage

Warsaw's pursuit to enter the ranks of Washington's closest European allies was motivated by a conviction that the United States could become Poland's truly dependable ally. As the “leader of the free world” America seemed to be a country that could help Poland in “catching up” with the West after years of Soviet domination. Indeed, U.S. support was crucial in encouraging and facilitating Poland's transition to a market economy. In the political-military domain, the United States played a leading role during the enlargement of NATO. Poland saw its security interests safeguarded best by continuous U.S. political and military engagement in Europe. Among Polish decision-makers the view still prevails of the United States as a “problem-solver” – the most powerful member of NATO, able to act decisively if need be and thus better suited to address Poland's potential security needs.

This foreign policy choice was made definitely easier given the vast popularity which the United States enjoyed among the Polish public. For numerous Poles, America was a frequent destination of economic emigration as early as the 19th century. During the Cold War an already entrenched belief of the United States as “a land of opportunity” was reinforced by the presumption that America would lead the struggle against the Soviet Union and eventually enable Poland to regain its full sovereignty. Memories of U.S. financial aid to the “Solidarity” movement and President Ronald Reagan’s tough anti-communist rhetoric are vivid in Poland even today. Throughout the decade of 1990s the majority of Poles grew even more fond of virtually everything labeled “American”.

The sheer difference in size and potential between the two states suggested that Warsaw had little chance of actually being on a par with Washington. Nonetheless, this relationship has never been a one-way street either. It is true that Poland has derived American support from its record as one of the dismantlers of the Soviet bloc as well as from the activity of a dynamic Polish lobby in Washington. After the Cold War, the United States had expressed its goal to establish “a Europe whole and free”, a goal which would be hard to achieve without a democratic, preferably Western-oriented Poland. Along with esteem and hope came trust when a Polish covert mission, organised during preparations to Operation Desert Storm, enabled the evacuation of American citizens (in fact members of U.S. intelligence) from Iraq. A decisive impulse for the bilateral relationship, however, could be tracked back to Poland’s support of NATO’s campaign against Yugoslavia in 1999. Warsaw, having just joined the Alliance, did not hesitate to back the operation against voices questioning its legality without a UN mandate. Operation Allied Force in Kosovo signaled a possible Polish-U.S. convergence on issues such as human rights, democracy promotion and the terms of use of military force. Not accidentally, Poland’s voting record in the United Nations was manifestly in-line with that of the United States.

Enter the “Strategic Partnership”

Poland emerged as one of the most successful yields of the U.S. strategy towards the former Soviet bloc and a cultivator of a strong transatlantic link. Unsurprisingly, the administration of George W. Bush decided to build on this achievement. During his first European trip as president in June 2001, Bush chose Poland as the place to deliver his most important foreign policy speech prior to September 11, 2001. Speaking in front of a crowd gathered in the Library of the University of Warsaw, he outlined his vision of U.S.-European relations, declaring his administration’s support for further NATO enlargement and democratic reforms in the former Soviet Union. He designated Poland as the benchmark of “what is possible” for

erstwhile communist states. President Bush went on to say that in light of Polish-American cooperation “the question is no longer what others can do for Poland, but what America and Poland and all of Europe can do for the rest of the world”. Even while 9/11 ultimately shifted U.S. priorities, Bush’s words definitely caught the attention of Polish leaders.

Poland backed the U.S.-led “coalition of the willing” in Afghanistan with the deployment of elite troops and demonstrated its rising political credentials by hosting an anti-terrorism conference which gathered leaders from almost all post-communist European states in November 2001. It was probably at this moment that the decision-makers in Warsaw began to think about the Polish-American relationship in terms of a *strategic partnership*, meant as a relationship that rose above the usual level of interstate co-operation and included the most intimate aspects of both sides’ foreign and security policies. Just how serious Poland was about becoming America’s “exemplar ally” became clear in late 2002 when Warsaw, among rising transatlantic tensions over U.S. plans to invade Iraq and deteriorating relations between the United States and major European countries, decided to purchase F-16 fighter jets in a multi-billion-dollar deal that was supposed to provide Poland with an influx of U.S. investments and modern technology.

As already mentioned before, the decision to join the invasion of Iraq marked an apex of Warsaw’s pro-American policies. Poland contributed 200 soldiers to Operation Iraqi Freedom, intending to support efforts to oust “a ruthless dictator” with alleged access to Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD), advance democracy in the Middle East and at the same time stand up to her duties as an ally of the United States. Polish troops, although not impressive in numbers, took an active part in combat. The real value of Polish support was political, however, as it helped to lend international legitimacy to America’s decision.

As Polish leaders themselves later admitted, Iraq did not pose a direct threat to Poland’s security. The principal reason for “going to Iraq” was to boost Poland’s international standing and to harden the strategic partnership with the United States. So, even though Poland was soon nick-named “the U.S. Trojan Horse” in Europe and accused of co-orchestrating divisions between fellow Europeans, this decision enjoyed broad political support, reflecting the general pro-American outlook of Polish foreign policy.

Reaping the Harvest

It looked as if this “quest for status” could actually bear fruit. The intensity of bilateral political co-operation from 2002 onwards, measured in the number of meetings between leaders of both states, was stunning. In September 2004 Poland was invited to join the so-

called Strategic Dialogue, whose purpose is to provide America's most important partners with a forum for consultations on range of bilateral and global issues (other states which enjoy such a status include e.g. Israel and Saudi Arabia). Among others, Poland and the United States discussed issues pertaining to the "global war on terror", the situation in the Middle East, the transformation of NATO and proliferation of WMD. Poland became the co-founder of the Proliferation Security Initiative, a U.S.-led coalition of states created in mid-2003, intended to comprehensively deepen their cooperation in the area of non-proliferation. Another pillar of the Polish-American relationship – U.S. assistance to the Polish armed forces – was also evolving in a promising direction. Poland became the top recipient of U.S. military aid in Europe and received free-of-charge transfers of U.S. military equipment to the Polish armed forces (navy, air force). In addition, a growing number of members of the Polish military staff took part in joint training and educational activities. Finally, in June 2003, the Polish government decided to take charge of a multinational division which was responsible for one of the occupational zones in Iraq and thus joined the post-war stabilisation efforts, deploying 2.500 soldiers.

Given the intensity of the political and military co-operation, expectations in Poland ran high as to what other benefits Warsaw could possibly reap from its manifestly pro-American stance. Such a mercantile approach took hold across the political spectrum, signaling that Poland saw its stake in tightening the relationship with the United States in down-to-earth terms as well. For instance, it was widely believed that Warsaw should capitalise on excellent political and military co-operation and add more dynamics to economic relations as well. U.S. corporations were among the top investors on the Polish market, yet Poland ranked poorly as a U.S. trade partner, and Polish companies were still largely invisible in the United States.

However, it was wrongly assumed that issues of importance to Poland could be settled "on the spot" and fully in line with Polish needs. This apparent lack of realism became especially visible with respect to two issues. The first issue was U.S. visas. Polish citizens are still required to obtain visas while travelling to the United States – a regulation which was viewed as discriminating, given the lack of a similar obligation vis-à-vis U.S. travelers to Poland. However, from the American point of view, the issue was of legal, and not political, nature: large portions of Polish citizens did not abide by the U.S. immigration laws and illegally extended their stay in this country. No extent of political and military support could help meet the requirements set by the U.S. legislators. Nonetheless visas became a tried-and-tested proof for Poland's "second rank status" in relations with the United States.

The second issue was the strengthening of Poland's economic presence in Iraq. Polish officials did not shy away from admitting that they had hoped that Polish companies could gain direct access to the sources of Iraqi oil and become involved in the reconstruction of the devastated country. However, it soon became clear that Polish enterprises could not compete with their American counterparts for lucrative Iraqi contracts because they lacked the necessary financial and organisational potential. So, the argument went, despite being in charge of an occupational zone, Poland could not secure substantial economic benefits.

To make things worse, the very rationale for backing the invasion of Iraq was called into question. Speaking in March, 2004, President Aleksander Kwaśniewski told the foreign journalists in Warsaw that "Poland was deluded" with regard to Iraqi Weapons of Mass Destruction. Those who had argued that the war would serve the noble goals of human rights protection and democracy promotion were soon confronted with the scandal in Abu Ghraib.

President Kwaśniewski's words echoed an already heated debate about Poland's actual role in Iraq and, more broadly, her rank in the hierarchy of U.S. allies. It became harder to claim that Warsaw had any significant influence on the policies crafted in Washington – a quality which could allow Poland to be a partner rather than a follower. Above all, however, and contrary to (misguided) popular expectations, Washington failed to "appreciate" and reward Warsaw's loyalty.

Waning U.S. Soft Power

Predictably, public support for Poland's engagement in Iraq was declining steadily. As early as April, 2004, shortly after the bombings in Madrid, more than 85% of Poles believed that because of this involvement Poland could become a target of a terrorist assault⁵³. At the same time, only one in two Poles demanded an immediate withdrawal of Polish troops, while a considerable group (43%) spoke in favour of sustaining their presence until accomplishing the mission, apparently still being wary with respect to Poland's status as a loyal ally or fearing a repetition of the "Spanish scenario". However, in a poll taken a year later, Poles tended to see the balance sheet of the Iraqi mission as increasingly unfavourable to Polish economic and political interests, as well as potentially damaging to Poland's international image, and overwhelmingly demanded a pull-out from Iraq (70%)⁵⁴.

This mood corresponded with an overall negative assessment of the United States' role in the post-Cold War world: The majority of Poles judged that America played a "partly positive,

⁵³ Survey of CBOS (Public Opinion Research Center, a leading Polish polling station) April 2004, www.cbos.pl.

⁵⁴ Survey of CBOS, April 2005.

partly negative” role but that under President George W. Bush it had contributed to the instigation of conflicts rather than to their resolution. A majority saw U.S. engagement in world affairs as motivated chiefly by America’s narrow interests⁵⁵. Public disapproval for U.S. foreign policy manifested itself in the attitudes towards foreign military deployments. While participation in UN-mandated operations seemed acceptable to over a half of the polled citizens, more than 70% opposed military actions undertaken by a group of states, without the backing of any multilateral body⁵⁶.

The unfulfilled expectations mentioned before are not the only reason for a significant drop of pro-American sympathies during the last two years. America ceases to be “the promised land” it used to be for past generations of Poles. Since May 2004, Poland is a member of the European Union. The EU will largely enable Poland’s civilisational and economic progress and European countries belong to Poland’s leading trade partners. Polish citizens benefit from open labour markets in numerous European countries and enjoy an unrestricted freedom of movement. In contrast, the implementation of a highly publicised F-16 deal is lagging behind and even the slightest malfunction of the fighter jet receives scornful commentaries. Again, exaggerated expectations as to the benefits of the deal play a significant role. To add insult to injury, Polish citizens wishing to travel to the United States still need to obtain a visa. For now, it seems that Poles could be turning away from America. However, as the last two “Transatlantic Trends” surveys demonstrate, European public opinion, also in Poland, knows how to distinguish between president Bush and America in general⁵⁷. The influence of the so-called “Bush factor” must be taken into consideration when gauging the actual pro-American sentiment and support for the United States. Consequently, the new administration – either Democratic or Republican – will most likely enjoy some initial “benefit of good will” among the Poles (but make no mistake: the “Obamamania” has reached Poland too and a majority of Poles opts for a Democrat in the White House, seeing John McCain’s possible success as simply “more of the same”).

In sum, Poland seems to be going through a period of adjustments towards a more balanced and realistic understanding of “what is possible” in the transatlantic relationship.

⁵⁵ Survey of CBOS, November 2004.

⁵⁶ Survey of CBOS, October 2006.

⁵⁷ “Transatlantic Trends” 2006 & 2007, www.transatlantictrends.org.

Missile Defence – Lessons Learned?

Against the background of what was already said, it should come as no surprise that initially Polish public opinion demonstrated skepticism vis-à-vis Washington's offer to Poland to participate in the Missile Defence project. Shortly after formal negotiations had begun in May 2007, over half of the respondents spoke out against hosting the U.S. installation on Polish soil.

The government of Jarosław Kaczyński hoped that hosting a European component of a crucial U.S. defence system could automatically make Poland a truly indispensable American ally and increase U.S. interest in safeguarding Polish security. Proponents of an instant agreement claimed that such a step would "once and for all" confirm that Poland belonged to the transatlantic community and would mark the last stage of Warsaw's road out of the former Soviet sphere of influence. In fact, Russia's vocal disapproval of the idea was seen as an ultimate argument in favour of such a decision.

At the same time, Warsaw reckoned that the missile defence talks created a window of opportunity which could be exploited to move the Polish-American strategic partnership to a higher level. More specifically, Kaczyński's government expected that an agreement on hosting a missile defence base would be accompanied by a political-military compact, holding additional security guarantees beyond those offered by Article 5 of the Washington Treaty. Although Polish negotiators declared that "we have learned our lessons" from the preceding years, particularly the Iraqi mission, the Kaczyński administration recognised that a missile defence base in Poland "as such" would be tantamount to an enhancement of Polish security.

The shift of power to the government of Donald Tusk as a result of early general elections in October 2007 signaled a change of this philosophy. The bottom line of the new government's approach was that while Warsaw recognised that missile defence would improve the security of the United States, it could also bring certain risks to Poland should a base be located on Polish soil. Poland upheld its interest in joining the missile defence system under the condition of receiving U.S. security assurances, accompanied by tangible military capabilities. In practical terms, Warsaw demanded a U.S. commitment to the modernisation of Polish armed forces which would rise above the level of hitherto American assistance in the framework of various aid programs, as well as a visible contribution to an outdated Polish aerial defence system. As Polish foreign minister Radosław Sikorski explained, Poland hoped that the United States would acknowledge that Polish security interests deserve to be protected as well, since accepting an installation of this kind would put these interests in

harm's way. Reciprocity became the key word in the vocabulary of the current Polish administration.

Interestingly enough, the Tusk government's stance seemed to be in line with the evolution of Polish public opinion. When polled in the first half of 2008, over 50% of Poles declared that they would be willing to back the decision involving the missile defence base as long as the U.S. would make increased contributions to Poland's security⁵⁸.

The missile defence talks indicated that Warsaw found it hard to respond to such U.S. proposals that did not take Poland's needs into consideration. Fatigue with the Bush administration has taken its toll. However, Warsaw mustered yet another "act of friendship" towards Washington, just as previous administrations had done with regard to joining America in Afghanistan and Iraq, when in August 2008 it finally concluded an agreement on hosting the base. It did so in return for a bilateral Declaration on Strategic Co-operation, which establishes enhanced consultation mechanisms, reaffirms U.S. commitment to the modernisation of the Polish armed forces and announces prospects for specific agreements on issues such as defence, industrial, research and technology cooperation. Moreover, the Tusk government managed to obtain a "tangible sign" of U.S. contributions to Polish security in that Washington agreed to send a Patriot defence system to be stationed in Poland. An issue that coincided with the conclusion of the deal was the Georgian-Russian clash over South Ossetia. However, it was not a decisive factor for Poland's eventual approval of the U.S. offer – the final agreement differed only slightly from the draft version prepared before the outbreak of hostilities in the Caucasus. Rather, Russia's conduct provided a crowning argument for the accurateness of Warsaw's expectations that participation in the missile defence system ought to be accompanied by both additional security guarantees and the abovementioned "tangible sign". Moreover, the crisis in Georgia contributed to a shift in Polish public opinion – nearly 60% of Poles finally spoke in favour of the missile shield shortly after the agreement was concluded. – thus largely removing a serious drawback that the Tusk administration saw in accepting the U.S. installation.

Looking Ahead

During the Bush era, Poland unfolded a remarkable ability to "follow the leader", thus becoming Washington's "first-choice ally", as the case of missile defence clearly demonstrated. At the same time, precisely because of the experience of the past few years,

⁵⁸ Survey of CBOS, May 2008.

Poland sought to use the negotiations over missile defence to break with her role as a follower. It is an altogether different matter whether the agreement itself will bring about a qualitative change to the Polish-American security relationship. Surely, it was Warsaw's intention to deepen it, hence the adoption of the accompanying Declaration on Strategic Co-operation. In fact, the bulk of Polish expectations as to the actual gains of the missile defence deal seems to be associated with this Declaration.

At this point the Declaration can hardly be regarded as a breakthrough. Not accidentally, it highlights those U.S. commitments to Poland's security which are already covered by the North Atlantic Treaty. Similarly, hosting a Patriot missiles battery might have a considerable symbolic meaning for the Polish public but is dismissed by military experts as a rather insignificant contribution to Polish defensive capabilities. All in all, the Declaration is a promise but not a guarantee of a deeper bilateral defence co-operation across the Atlantic.

Moreover, Washington's attention is focused not on the Declaration but rather on the actual missile defence agreement. Only once it is ratified by President Lech Kaczyński will Washington ponder on adding more substance to the strategic partnership by means of additional bilateral agreements. And let's not forget about the unsure future of the European component of the project: The U.S. Congress has repeatedly warned that it will withhold further financing until the system has been thoroughly tested and certified as operational. As for the presidential candidates, Senator McCain is an ardent supporter of the project while Senator Obama has taken a far more nuanced approach.

This does not mean that missile defence will become yet another disappointment in Polish-U.S. relations. Of course, should the next U.S. administration abandon the current course with respect to missile defence or (which seems rather unlikely) even withdraw from the agreement with Poland, the strategic partnership could suffer a setback. At the same time, it is hard to imagine that it could compromise the whole agenda of Polish-U.S. co-operation which now covers, among others, issues as delicate as military-to-military co-operation in Afghanistan or the ongoing efforts to enhance interoperability of Polish armed forces within the North Atlantic Alliance. That is why, despite stiffening the stance on the missile defence, the current Polish administration has at no point questioned the very rationale of close Polish-American ties. Warsaw will seek to maintain U.S. engagement in Europe and attempt to inspire or uphold American policies in the post-Soviet space.

What if the foreign policy agenda of the next U.S. administration turns out to be focused, among others, on the set of problems originating from increasingly alarming Russian policies

in this region? So far, McCain has adopted a much more combative approach vis-à-vis the Kremlin as compared to Obama (which could actually earn the senator from Arizona some popularity in Warsaw). Nonetheless, no matter who prevails in the presidential race, Warsaw is likely to support U.S. initiatives in the east of Europe and also to come forth with its own advice and initiatives. For instance, a delegation of members of U.S. Congress, which visited Poland in August 2008, received a thorough Polish analysis of the implications of the Georgian-Russian clash over South Ossetia for the security situation in this part of Europe. Poland and the United States remain bound by common values, interests and similar world views. Any future problems with Russia may become powerful instruments for bringing both states even closer together.

Still, the lack of “automatism” in accepting the U.S. proposal on missile defence could suggest that Poland intends to adopt a more balanced approach towards her strategic partnership with America. In other words, while recognising that both states have similar perspectives on a number of issues, Poland does not have to back every U.S. initiative “by default” but may rather consider any such decision after having taken into account her interests of a (at best) middle-sized country. The run-up to the conclusion of the missile defence agreement hinted at a re-calibration of the relationship. As a result of this recalibration the Polish side would depart from making ill-founded demands vis-à-vis Washington (e.g. in terms of the size of military aid, which was incorrectly reported by the international press as amounting to billions of dollars) while the U.S. would drop the predilection to take Polish support for granted. Over time, this recalibration may become the most durable new element of the bilateral strategic partnership.

II. Online and Offline Resources Related to the Contributions

This section contains relevant documents, which our authors refer to in their respective contributions. The indicated internet sources (URLs) were checked on October 23, 2008. We do not claim to give a full compilation of all relevant sources on the issue at hand.

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