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**A NEW TRANSATLANTIC RELATIONSHIP?**  
EUROPEAN RESPONSES TO US GLOBAL HEGEMONY

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## Abstract

The paper addresses the question of how Europe (in NATO and the EU) has responded to changes in US announced and operational strategic and military policy and what the principal factors are for explaining European responses to what is perceived as a new form of American hegemony. The discussion is centered around the question of whether the United States has altered its conception of hegemony from one based on consent to one based on 'a preponderance of force', and therefore to have abandoned the crucial process of consensus building through persuasion, which has formed the foundation for the post-war Euro-Atlantic community. If so, then the problem relates more to the fundamental question of maintaining the security community during significant international change and perceived changes in European and American interests than it does to the specific policy content of American foreign policy. European reactions to the perceived change in American foreign policy have been varied in style and rhetoric, but can be divided into those that have been concerned with safeguarding the achievements of the post-war era by following the United States wherever it may choose to go, or those who see a need for constructing a different relationship with the United States based on a more independent European foreign policy stance.

*"We are engaged in a deadly stand off with the axis of evil. You know who I am talking about Iran, Iraq and one of the Koreas ... and don't forget France!"*

*(Will Ferrell (as G.W. Bush) in Saturday Night Live)*

Although the above quote is comedy, political satire usually contain an element of truth, and the inclusion of France in the 'axis of evil' although funny also shows a far more serious issue, which has to do with a change in how the United States view some of its European allies. The change is not one sided – the Europeans are also displaying changes in their perceptions of the US as a result of the growing concern over American foreign policy in general, and in particularly the war in Iraq. The result is that the European discourse on the transatlantic relationship has changed in a negative direction and that the cooler transatlantic relations have led to a change in European foreign and security policy aspirations.

It is suggested here that the changed discourse and policy aspirations particularly after 2001 may be regarded as European responses to a perceived shift in American management of its global hegemony. In contrast policy changes preceding 2001 are largely responses to the structural changes in the international system following the end of the Cold War. In other words the issue is not opposition to America as a hegemonic power, – a position which after all has been widely accepted and welcomed in Europe since the end of the Second World War, but concerns Europe's own security in an era of less priority afforded to Europe by the United States and above all the way the United States is perceived to *manage* its position as global hegemon. The management of American hegemony is perceived to have changed from being based on consensus achieved through patient argument and persuasion, to a form of hegemony based on brute power and a take-it-or-leave attitude.

The problem is that if it is really the case that European concerns are centred on American management of its hegemony rather than simply disagreement over substantive policy issues, then the problem in the transatlantic relationship is about the fundamentally important question of how value-based relationships such as the Euro-Atlantic community are maintained and secured. It is not necessarily a problem that 'Europeans are from Venus and Americans from Mars' (Kagan, 2002) –after all that has long been the case- but what might be a serious problem is if the relationship between them is no longer managed in a way that engenders trust and shared core values and organisational principles. If the trust in a value based relationship is undermined and if values and identities change in different directions,

then the core foundations of the relationship might be at risk. The focus therefore in this paper will be to discover whether the crisis in the transatlantic relationship is merely 'squabbles among friends' or if it should be seen as symptomatic of the much more serious problem of fundamental ideational changes with repercussions for the level of trust and legitimacy between its members.

## THE ROLE OF HEGEMONY IN SECURITY COMMUNITIES

It is frequently stated that the relationship between the United States and Europe is cemented through shared values, which have compensated for the two sides' different strategic interests and unequal military strength. Although this problem, known as NATO's 'nuclear dilemma' (Schwartz, 1983), is widely acknowledged as a problem without a solution, it has nevertheless been attempted solved throughout NATO's history by undertaking continuous processes of persuasion and consensus building (Bertram, 1983), based on an informal understanding of the United States as *primus inter pares*. In most cases the 'consensus building method' has worked, where the Europeans, albeit grudgingly, eventually would be persuaded to at least not obstruct the consensus building process<sup>1</sup>.

Consensus building through continuous dialogue and persuasion has been a key factor for Alliance cohesion by creating knowledge and understanding between the military and foreign policy elites on both sides of the Atlantic and thereby cementing the shared values and principles underpinning the Euro-Atlantic community. It is precisely such processes that are regarded as necessary conditions for establishing and maintaining a Deutchian security community, because the primary 'glue' of a security community is shared values, mutual trust and collective identity (Adler and Barnett, 1998, 38). However, the emphasis on values within the discourse on security communities does not indicate that power within security communities is unimportant. In fact, power and hegemonic ideas are central concepts for understanding how security communities develop and are maintained over the long term (Adler & Barnett, 1998, 39), where the powerful members are likely to take on a hegemonic role within the security community by performing an agenda-setting role and acting as a role model for the rest of the members of the security community. The hegemony exercised within a security community is a hegemony based on consensus, where the hegemon's ideas are accepted by the non-hegemonic members of the community, not because they are enforced

<sup>1</sup> There are of course several examples of consensus not being reached, where France in 1967 is probably the prime example, but also Denmark's so called 'footnote policy' during the 1980s, and the continuing stalemate between Turkey and Greece.

but because they are perceived to be right and to constitute appropriate action. This stands in opposition to the traditional conception of hegemony as one state having a 'preponderance of resources' (Keohane, 1984), enabling the hegemonic state to coercively socialise new norms into the non-hegemonic states<sup>2</sup>. In this alternative conception of hegemony, hegemony is founded on moral, cultural and intellectual leadership, based on consent and rooted in legitimacy amongst the secondary states. Crucially, such hegemony must be continually maintained and nourished through socialization and by continuous efforts by the hegemon at maintaining legitimacy.

Power within the security community may be understood as the authority to determine what constitutes the shared values underpinning the security community (Adler and Barnett, 1998, 39). In practice this means that the strong centre performs an educational role through socialization, whereas the less powerful members undergo a process of social learning. Socialization and social learning are all the more necessary in times of change, where values must be reinforced. Therefore, one of the essential tasks of the leader of a security community is to ensure that the values and the identity of the security community remain shared, even during times of change and crisis as has been the order of the day since the end of the Cold War and since the attack on the Twin Towers and the Pentagon in 2001.

In the discussion here on European responses to American hegemony, the issue is centered around the question of whether the United States, when faced with crisis and large-scale international change, has altered its conception of hegemony from one based on consent to one based on 'a preponderance of force', and therefore to have abandoned the crucial process of socialization through persuasion. If so, then the problem of the current Atlantic crisis relates more to the fundamental question of maintaining the security community during significant international change when persuasion and socialization processes are crucial, than to particular disagreements over particular policies.

<sup>2</sup> The realist form of hegemony, was used by the Athenians against the Melians in the Peloponnesian War. According to the supposedly 'arch realist' Thucydides (Lebow and Kelly, 2001), such hegemony is based on control and force, which will ultimately end in rebellion. The conception of hegemony, which is relevant for the maintenance of security communities, may be either described as a neo-Gramscian form of hegemony, or if going back to Thucydides, as *hegemonia*, which is a hegemony founded on moral, cultural and intellectual leadership, based on consent and rooted in legitimacy amongst the secondary states.

## EUROPEAN VIEWS ON AMERICAN ANNOUNCED AND OPERATIONAL FOREIGN AND MILITARY POLICIES

Although European consternation over American foreign policy only really came to the fore following the election of George W Bush, and entering into free fall in the run up to, and aftermath of, the war in Iraq, the change in the transatlantic relationship can, as suggested by Michael Cox, not be wholly attributed to just 'one controversial president or one unfortunate war' (Cox, 2005, 207). Rather the change in the trans-Atlantic relationship is the result of a gradual process, going back to the Clinton Administration, particularly to differences in opinion on how to handle the war in the former Yugoslavia and in Kosovo. On both occasions the United States displayed a degree of (understandable) impatience and exasperation over the European inability to act decisively in the face of the growing tragedy in Bosnia and Kosovo. By the time of the Dayton accord, key personnel within the Clinton Administration had decided that the Europeans could simply not be counted on in the face of a real crisis, and that the Americans had to take the lead role (Cox, 2005, 212, Holbrooke, 1998). As a result the Europeans were left playing second fiddle to the American tune to a problem that was decidedly a European rather than an American priority.

A similar situation arose in Kosovo. When the crisis in Kosovo escalated during the winter of 1998 and the diplomatic effort failed to stop yet another tragedy unfolding within South Eastern Europe, it was yet again the United States who led the Operation Allied Force. The Europeans, who on this occasion had contributed with extensive NATO forces, found that they could not participate actively in the air campaign because of inadequate military capabilities. Whilst it is fair to say that the Kosovo campaign was a success in the sense that NATO went to war (out-of-area) as an alliance for the first time in its history decisively defeating the Serbian forces, the actual conduct of the war, left the Americans with the firm decision never again to conduct a 'war by committee'.

The issues raised in the Balkans cannot be said to have led to an actual crisis in the transatlantic relationship, but was largely limited to corridor grumblings among security policy-makers and academics. However, they highlighted the differences in the two sides' preferred way of action with a European preference for diplomacy and political pressure, and an American preference for using military force at a much earlier stage. Moreover, the experience from both Bosnia and Kosovo led to a change, albeit subtle, in the way the United States behaved towards Europe, particularly by the fact that the Americans became less concerned



with NATO and took the Europeans themselves less seriously – a change that was clearly resented within NATO circles<sup>3</sup>. The accusation of military weakness was however accepted internally in European policy circles, which certainly can be seen as a contributing factor to the renewed efforts within the EU to establish a European Security and Defence policy (ESDP) with the implied purpose of being able to act both independently of, and more effectively alongside, the United States. But it is important to note that a subtle shift in the relationship had occurred as the Europeans had to come to terms with no longer being the main security concern of the Americans, and that the Americans seemed less concerned with maintaining consensus within the Alliance through the traditional consensus building processes.

### **George W Bush and ‘Winds of Change’ in Transatlantic Relations**

With the election of George W. Bush, European concerns increased significantly, although at first mostly related to the worry about withdrawal of the United States into concern with domestic issues and a shift in American foreign policy interests from Europe to Asia. These concerns seemed to be vindicated by the initial rather limited foreign policy plans of the new administration, in which the newly elected Bush talked about doing less rather than more (Cox 2005, 214). However, it soon became evident that the new Bush administration’s foreign policy plans were more ‘active’ than the implied inactivity through ‘doing less’ would suggest, as ‘doing less’ seemed to be implemented (without consultation and negotiation) through the controversial repudiation of a whole string of multilateral agreements that were regarded as politically very significant in Europe. Therefore even before the attacks on Washington and New York in 2001, Europeans were already deeply concerned that the new administration represented a significant shift in both content of foreign policy, and in the way of doing business with its allies, which seemed to have fundamentally shifted from bargaining based on mutual respect and multilateralism to unilateralism and a disregard for the long established tradition of a negotiated order (Ikenberry, 2001). The crisis seemed deeper than those before, and perhaps deeper than any of the individual cases of repudiated international agreements would have warranted. As suggested by Elizabeth Pond (2004), crises in the past had tended to be over single issues – not over a whole range of issues, which together added up to constituting a significant departure from what had until then been ‘normal’ foreign policy (Flockhart, 2004).

<sup>3</sup> Interviews conducted with NATO officials on a number of occasions between 2001-2005.

It was within this acute sense of transatlantic crisis that the attacks of September 11 took place. As suggested by Michael Cox (2005, 215) the European response represented at once a heartfelt compassion with those affected by the attacks and sincere shock and revulsion by the atrocity, but was also seen as an opportunity to repair some of the damage in transatlantic relations. Within only a day of the attacks, NATO members had invoked Article V of the Atlantic Treaty for the first time in the history of NATO. European support for the now declared 'war on terrorism' remained firm, despite dislike of the term, as the United States began attacks (without NATO) on Afghanistan in October 2001, leading to the defeat of the Taliban government in November 2001. At this point Germany and France had declared their explicit support for the US response and offered military contributions to the effort in Afghanistan – offers which however were rejected by Washington (Wallace, 2002, 113).

Had this paper been written at the end of November 2001 it would probably now have proceeded towards a cautious optimism on the prospects for re-establishing the transatlantic relationship on a more healthy footing, by suggesting that the Europeans had acknowledged that they had to do more on improving their military capabilities and transatlantic cooperation on the prevention of terrorism, whereas the United States might have been willing to accept that what the Europeans lacked in decisive military action, they compensated for with their ability to 'pick up the bill' for post conflict reconstruction (Hill, 2004, 149). Even if such an outcome had been possible following the fall of Kabul, by the beginning of 2002, the Europeans were once again worried by American rhetoric, when in the 2002 State of the Union address, the President referred to Iran, Iraq and North Korea as an 'axis of evil'- rogue states sponsoring terrorist organizations and oppressing their own people. Apart from Europeans recoiling from the language employed, most European terrorist experts would have rated states such as Yemen, Pakistan, Algeria and Chechnya (Hill, 2004, 151) well above the three included in the 'axis of evil' as sponsors of terrorism, whereas if the issue was domestic oppression, the list seemed remarkably short and not particularly logical. Former French minister of foreign affairs, Hubert Védrine, denounced the characterization as simplistic and suggested that the Americans had fallen into precisely the trap set by the terrorists – to start a 'clash of civilizations' (Holm, 2004, 484).

The crisis deepened further over the summer of 2002, when the language of pre-emptive strikes was increasingly employed both as a means of dealing with general threats to US national security and as a specific means to take action against Saddam Hussein. By the time of the publication of the *National Security Strategy* in September 2002, pre-emption was already a part of the evolving American security policy discourse, which Europeans regarded as a serious breach of previously accepted approaches to diplomacy. As the document contained

no promise of negotiations about the circumstances under which pre-emptive power would be used, John Peterson concluded that it seemed ‘to spell the end of the negotiated international order’ (Peterson, 2004, 624).

From then on the transatlantic relationship entered into its probably most serious crisis ever, mirrored by an equally serious crisis within the EU. The crisis was caused by differences in threat perceptions between some Europeans and the Americans. France, Germany, Belgium and other NATO and EU members did not share the American assessment that Iraq constituted a clear and present danger that would warrant forced regime change. They argued that the weapons inspections should be given more time to assess the likelihood of Iraq possessing WMD, and that the presence of inspectors would limit the threat (Terrif, 2004, 423). This was in opposition to the assessment by the US and Britain along a number of other European states believing that the terrorist threat over the long term could only be addressed through (if necessary forced) regime change.

### **The Iraq War and a Deepening Transatlantic Crisis**

The relentless drive towards war with Iraq without UN or allied support brought the European disunity over American foreign and strategic policy into the open. In early February 2003 the political dispute within NATO spilled into the public domain as France, Germany and Belgium refused authorization for advanced NATO military planning to help defend Turkey in the event of war in Iraq. This essentially amounted to a refusal to honour Article 4 of the Atlantic Treaty, which states that ‘NATO members will consult together whenever, in the opinion of any of them, the territorial integrity, political independence or security of any member country is threatened’ (Terrif, 2004, 440). Although Turkey was eventually furnished with anti-air Patriot missiles, AWACS surveillance aircraft and chemical and biological defensive units (Park, 2004, 510), the issue caused ‘fear and loathing’ in NATO (Terrif, 2004, 420). An unnamed NATO diplomat is reported to have described the incident as ‘a near death experience’ and U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell raised the spectre of NATO breaking up as a consequence (Park, 2004, 510).

The drive towards war also resulted in a serious crisis within the EU. The refusal by France, Germany and Belgium to release NATO forces for the defence of Turkey raised the issue of just how dependent the ESDP might be on the goodwill of Turkey. Turkey as a full NATO member, but ‘only’ an EU applicant, appeared to hold considerable power in the question on when and if to release NATO forces for use within the ESDP. The crisis within the EU was brought to a head when also in January/February 2003 it became clear that the EU’s claim to be able to speak and act with one voice through its Common Foreign and Security Policy

(CFSP) could simply not be counted on in practice. With the publication of the so called 'Letter of Eight' led by Prime Ministers Jose Maria Aznar of Spain and Tony Blair of Britain, and the subsequent 'Vilnius letter' in which 10 accession states and prospective member states supported the U.S. line, it was clear that the 15 EU members and the ten accession states held profoundly different views on the question of support for the United States and the war in Iraq. The Commission under Prodi along with France, Germany, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Sweden, Austria, Finland, Slovenia and Cyprus were against the war, whilst Britain, Denmark, Spain, Portugal, Italy, Poland, Hungary, Estonia, Latvia, Slovakia, Bulgaria, Czech Republic and Romania saw no other option than to support the United States. A smaller group of EU and accession states chose fence-sitting including Ireland, Belgium, Lithuania and Malta as well as Greece, which as holder of the EU presidency, had to remain neutral. At the emergency European Council Meeting called by Greece in February 2003 and the routine spring Council in March the leaders of the major EU countries could barely bring themselves to speak with each other (Allen and Smith, 2004, 96). The only accord possible was an agreement on the fundamental role of the UN in resolving the Iraq crisis, elegantly papering over that individual EU member states were busily pursuing fundamentally different and opposing policies (Allen and Smith, 2004, 96).

Turkey as a non-member of the EU, but on the brink of EU accession negotiations and as neighbour with friendly relations with Iraq adds up to Turkey warranting special attention. Clearly the issue of Iraq held geopolitical implications that were far more profound for Turkey than for any other European state (Park, 2004, 494) simply through its geographic proximity and in particular as a result of the potential Kurdish ramifications, where the Ankara view was that the Kurdish issue posed a threat both to regional stability and to Turkey's own territorial integrity (Park, 2004, 498). The position was brought to a head in July 2002 when Wolfowitz at a visit to Ankara had left little doubt that U.S. plans involved ground attacks to be launched from Turkish territory. The situation that unfolded from September 2002 was characterized by intense American diplomatic attentions, mirrored by a steadily increasing opposition to war and by a gradual mass level self-alignment towards the Middle East, simultaneously with the political efforts at achieving accession status to the EU. The question of whether Turkey should allow attacks on Iraq from Turkish territory led to a parliamentary crisis and to the refusal by the Turkish National Assembly to permit US troops to enter into Turkish territory (Park, 2004, 494). The immediate result was recriminations from Wolfowitz, who suggested that Turkey should apologize for refusing entry and chided Turkey's military leaders for failing to exercise leadership (Park, 2004, 195), causing a political uproar in Turkey and further fuelling the already growing anti-Americanism. Hence even in the case of Turkish-American relations, which have otherwise been warmed by the American continuous support for

Turkish EU membership and Turkey's obvious strategic importance for the United States, a transatlantic chill had set in as a result of the war in Iraq.

Throughout the Iraq crisis Javier Solana's attempts to preserve unity by brokering innocuous common statements were undermined by the actions of individual member states (Allen and Smith, 2004, 95). Following the publication of the 'Letter of Eight' and the 'Vilnius letter' the conflict between 'Old Europe' and 'New Europe' even threatened the looming enlargement of the EU as Jacques Chirac linked the issues in his remarks that the prospective members of the EU 'missed a good opportunity to shut up', and by stating that if Romania and Bulgaria really had wanted to 'diminish their chances to join the EU, then they couldn't find a better way of doing it'<sup>4</sup>. As hostilities erupted in Iraq, the EU was deeply divided, with doubt about whether the EU would be able to develop its own foreign and defence policy and whether the divisions would prove permanent (Menon, 2004, 631).

The split in the EU makes it decidedly impossible to speak of a particular 'European response' either to the Iraq crisis itself or to American hegemony more generally. Both issues have in effect become intertwined, where support for the United States and the war in Iraq has become seen as an expression of support for the United States as leader of the Euro-Atlantic Community rather than a question of the ethics of invading a sovereign state, albeit with a disagreeable regime. It seems safe to say that Europeans being 'Venutians' would prefer diplomacy until all other avenues had been exhausted, and then only invade with explicit UN support, suggesting that those European states which supported the United States, either rhetorically in the two letters of support, or practically by actually contributing to the coalition did so for the sake of the transatlantic relationship.

The crisis has continued, but following the initial bitter remarks of 2003, most EU leaders have judged silence to be the best strategy for at least drawing back from the brink. Furthermore with changes of government in Spain (2004), Germany (2005), Poland (2005) Italy (2006) and France (2007), a subtle shift in European positions has occurred. Particularly Angela Merkel has returned to a much more traditional German foreign policy with greater emphasis on the transatlantic relationship (though not without criticising e.g. the continued existence of Guatanámo), and a slightly less cosy relationship with Chirac. However, the changes in government has also emphasised the vulnerability of the coalition in Iraq, as several European coalition members have withdrew (Spain, Hungary, the Netherlands, Portugal,

<sup>4</sup> Chirac's comments came on 17 February after the Extraordinary European Council Meeting.

Bulgaria and Ukraine) following changes in political leadership, whilst even staunch allies such as Britain, Denmark and Poland and several more are looking to either end or scale down their contribution during 2007. There is no doubt that as the situation in Iraq looks more and more bleak, and as casualties in national coalition contingents escalate, that the fragile public support for participation in the coalition is weakening. Indeed a Pew Research Centre poll showed people in Great Britain, France and Spain saying the U.S.-led war in Iraq is a greater danger to world peace than the governments of Iran or North Korea (Pew Research Poll, 2006).

Since the re-election of George W. Bush, a change has however occurred from the other side of the Atlantic, where the re-elected Bush has gone out of his way to project a different kind of tone when talking about Europe (Daalder, 2005). In his first press conference after re-election, the President unusually talked about 'the importance of working with partners and friends', mentioning specifically both NATO and the EU. He mentioned them again in his inaugural address (Daalder, 2005), suggesting that the second G.W. Bush administration is in the business of mending fences and has dropped the previous 'tone'. This was a message that was reiterated in Condoleezza Rice's first visit to Europe as Secretary of State, in February 2005, when she declared at the Institut d'Etudes Politiques, Paris that 'it is time to turn away from past disagreements and to open a new chapter in our relationship and a new chapter in our alliance' (Rice, 2005). The message was further reiterated by the President during his Europe trip also in February 2005, which was widely perceived to be conciliatory, bringing with him a 'new Rumsfeld', who no longer spoke badly about 'old Europe' and the apparent determination to re-forge a new co-operative relationship with Europe. However, the substantial outcome of the Europe trips must be said to have been limited, as the Europeans were not willing to extend their support in Iraq except by the symbolic pledge by NATO to train 1000 Iraqi security forces a year.

Since the re-election of George W. Bush, disagreements in the trans-Atlantic relationship have somewhat mellowed with a substantial rapprochement from both sides of the Atlantic. Whilst disagreement persists on Iraq and Guantánamo, at least the language seems to have changed with the President now conceding that he would like the prison camp closed and the two sides apparently having similar attitudes in relation to Iran, North Korea and the handling of the Palestinian Hamas-led government. In relation to Iran, the U.S. agreed in March 2005 to the EU approach of diplomacy and incentives in the form of a possible WTO membership, whereas the EU agreed to a tougher approach should the diplomatic negotiations fail. With the election of the ultraconservative Iranian President Ahmadinejad, the EU broke off negotiations and has since re-evaluated the threat posed by Iran (Malmvig and Jakobsen, 2006,

4). At the EU summit in Vienna in June 2006, Bush and leaders of the EU, said they are past their disputes over Iraq and are united against Iran's and North Korea's nuclear ambitions. All in all therefore, both the tone and in the case of substance in a number of previously highly contentious issues, the two sides of the Atlantic appear to have moved closer to one another.

## **CHANGES IN EUROPEAN FOREIGN AND MILITARY POLICIES**

Despite the recent rapprochement, the crisis in the transatlantic relationship has had repercussions for policy making in Europe and has led to European soul searching on how Europe should proceed within NATO and the EU. According to Chris Pattern, the Commissioner for External affairs, the Iraq issue had 'blown apart Europe's ambitions to be a global player' and 'the handling of the Iraq issue has been seriously damaging for the CFSP (The Independent, 10 March 2003). In NATO a similarly gloomy state of affairs prevailed, indicated in public in the crisis over Turkey, but within the Alliance in the frustration over the apparent American downgrading of the Alliance following the two campaigns in the Balkans, and especially the stinging rejection of NATO's offer of help in Afghanistan following the invocation of Article 5 in 2001. It seemed that although NATO had appeared extremely successful in forging a new post Cold War role, especially in relation to enlargement, that its practical difficulties in operating alongside the U.S. on the battlefield negated what had been achieved and launched the Alliance into a deep crisis of confidence<sup>5</sup>. That the American disregard for NATO was not imagine by the Europeans was indicated by the reportedly popular internal Pentagon slogan on NATO; 'NATO- keeping the myth alive'.

### **Policy responses in the EU**

EU policy responses to the events and perceived changes in the transatlantic relationship have occurred within all three EU pillars in particular within the Common Foreign Security Policy (CFSP), within the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) and within the overall area of Justice and Home Affairs (JHA) in connection with the EU's attempt following 9/11 to strengthen cooperation on the prevention of international terrorism. In all the above areas, the story is not as clearly relegated to doom and gloom as suggested by the above remarks by Chris Pattern and as suggested by perceptions on both sides of the Atlantic. In fact it could well be that the shocks encountered over the last half decade may have constituted a wake-up call for European member states to address the gaps and weaknesses of the collective system (Hill, 2004, 144). Indeed Anand Menon (2004) ponders whether the ESDP may in fact emerge strengthened from the traumas experienced during the transatlantic crisis (Menon, 2004, 631).

<sup>5</sup> Interviews with NATO officials, Ohrid, FYROM, September 2004.

As suggested earlier the tragedy in the former Yugoslavia and the inability by the Europeans to solve the Balkan crises without US involvement, leading to American leadership in strategic and military thinking has had profound effects on policy-making in Europe. Both conflicts clearly exposed European military deficiencies in coping with violent conflict on the EU's doorstep. They also exposed a difference in approach between the Europeans and Americans, Americans preferred high tech and high altitude warfare – leaving the reconstruction and ground forces to the UN-mandated forces in Bosnia and Kosovo. The question that will probably always haunt Europeans is if the genocide at Srebrenica could have been prevented with better equipped or more numerous forces on the ground. Certainly the tragedy of Srebrenica could never have been prevented by air strikes, leading to a European realization that a European military role has to be backed by real deployable force with the ability to avoid such a massacre ever again happening in Europe.

The immediate policy response to the experience in Bosnia and later reiterated by the experience in Kosovo was a British and French rapprochement on the necessity for the development of ESDP. The meeting between Blair and Chirac in St. Malo, France in December 1998 cleared the political blockage between Europeanists and Atlanticists and opened up for the possibility of embarking on the road towards the security and defence integration that had been politically introduced in the Treaty of Amsterdam. Almost immediately following St. Malo, the situation in Kosovo started to deteriorate rapidly, thereby underlining the need for ESDP as well as the growing gap in capabilities between the Europeans and the Americans. The result was a rapid succession of decisions within the EU starting with the June 1999 European Council in Cologne, which committed the EU to gain the 'capacity for autonomous action backed by credible military force'. At the December 1999 Helsinki Council, the Member States undertook in the so called Headline Goal to have 60.000 troops at the Union's disposal capable of carrying out all the Petersberg missions by 2003. At the December 2001 Laeken European Council the Belgian EU presidency declared the ESDP operational.

Apart from adding an operational impetus to the developments of the ESDP, it could also be argued that the transatlantic crisis added a strategic impetus, as it prompted the EU to produce its first ever security strategy paper. With the adoption in 2003 by the EU of its European Security Strategy (ESS) a clear strategic formulation was added. The ESS was a reflection of the consternation around European capitals over the Bush administration's National Security Strategy. The main author of the ESS, Robert Cooper, had previously declared that 'if the Europeans do not like the United States' National Security Strategy they should develop their own rather than complain from the sidelines' (Cooper, 2003, 165). The document contains a



number of specific policy objectives in relation to conflict prevention, on rogue states, nuclear proliferation, and particularly on preventive (as opposed to pre-emptive) military action. As suggested by Christopher Hill, 'the ESS was produced partly in order to adapt to new circumstances, but also 'to convince the Americans that Europe was not totally mired in delusional 'soft power' thinking' (Hill, 2004b).

Following the events of September 11, a number of political and diplomatic initiatives were taken in the EU to show support for the United States in its fight against terrorism. The extraordinary European Council of 21 September 2001 stated that it would fight terrorism in all its forms and that 'the fight against terrorism will, more than ever, be a priority objective of the European Union. Within only a couple of days of the attacks, the EU tabled proposals for a European Arrest Warrant' to more effectively be able to combat cross-boarder terrorism (Hill, 2004, 147). Also in recognition of the international aspect of terrorism, it was decided at the June 2002 European Council in Seville to increase the Union's involvement in the fight against terrorism through a coordinated approach embracing all Union policies, including the CFSP and ESDP. All in all up until the linkage of the war on terrorism with war in Iraq, the political and diplomatic response within the EU was characterised by collective action and a high degree of support for the United States. Political and diplomatic support from both the EU and NATO remained firm as the United States embarked on its 'war on terror' with a military campaign in Afghanistan, even though concerns over military action is never far from the surface in Europe. Despite the disagreements among member states over Iraq, the EU has since 2003 engaged in a growing number of military, civilian and police operations under the auspices of the ESDP, in some cases using NATO assets under the Berlin Plus arrangements, which suggests that the EU is now an organization with a clear military and security dimension. Although the initial impetus for the security and defence dimension of the EU undoubtedly was the tragedy of Yugoslavia, it seems that the transatlantic crisis in fact has provided further political incentive for particularly those member states, which traditionally have belonged to the 'Atlanticist' camp within the EU.

### **Policy responses in NATO**

In NATO the events in the Balkans also prompted a flurry of activity apart from NATO's ongoing policies of enlargement and attempts at establishing a European Security and Defence Identity (ESDI) as part of the relationship with the EU. For the purposes here, the two policy categories that specifically warrants, albeit brief, attention are 'out-of-area' and 'capabilities' – two areas, which have increasingly become intertwined.

The issue over NATO's actual ability to conduct military missions successfully was brought to a head in the campaign against Serbia in Kosovo, where the disparity between American and European (as well as Canadian) military capabilities were seen as raising serious questions about the relevance of NATO as a military organization (Terrif, 2004, 424). Of course 'burden sharing' has always been a recurring problem within NATO, and the related problem of the capabilities gap was already addressed as the Kosovo campaign unfolded when the Alliance met in Washington in April 1999 to celebrate its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. At the Washington Summit, NATO agreed on the Defence Capabilities Initiative (DCI), which set the aim for alliance members to ensure the interoperability and common capabilities needed to perform the roles and missions outlined in NATO's New Strategic Concept - also agreed at the Washington Summit. As the Kosovo campaign unfolded, the importance of the DCI became crystal clear, suggesting that the gap between U.S. power projection capabilities and those of Europe was particularly striking in modern and transport aircraft and in smart weapons. Furthermore European capabilities were seen as lacking in strategic lift, intelligence, and command, control and communications. The lesson drawn by the Americans from the campaign in Kosovo was that the European members of NATO simply did not possess the capabilities that would enable the two sides to fight on the same battlefield.

It could be said that if Kosovo was a wake-up call for the EU to improve its defence and security dimension, so the Kosovo campaign was a brutal wake-up call for NATO on the extent of its capability gap. However, it was also clear that the political environment was not conducive to large-scale increases in defence spending in European electorates that are traditionally not willing to prioritise 'guns over butter'. As a result NATO abandoned the DCI at the Prague Summit in November 2002 because very little had been achieved in meeting the set targets. Instead, NATO formed the Prague Capability Committee along with a commitment to establish the NATO Response Force (NRF), which is supposed to furnish NATO with the ability to rapidly dispatch military forces into deteriorating security situations wherever they may arise. By introducing the NRF, NATO was simultaneously also able to address the inherent problem of capabilities, as the NRF was seen as a lever for developing European military capabilities with specific reference to the Europeans' ability to operate within the NRF, and once again to be able to operate on the same battlefield as the Americans.

The lesson from Kosovo clearly stuck with the Americans because when the attacks on the Pentagon and World Trade Centre prompted the Europeans to invoke Article Five of the North Atlantic Treaty, not only was this remarkable show of sympathy and solidarity rejected by the American administration, but the offer of help was generally seen as rebuffed by

Donald Rumsfeld's article in *The Guardian*, stating that 'This war will not be waged by a grand alliance ... Instead it will involve floating coalitions of countries ... the mission will define the coalition – not the other way around' (*The Guardian*, 28 September, 2001). The European feeling of having been rebuffed was cemented as the Pentagon repeatedly stated that it would not allow itself to be bound by the Alliance, followed up in practice as the United States fought the Taliban without involving NATO, thus in a very public way highlighting the severity of the crisis in the Atlantic Alliance and underscoring American disdain for its traditional allies.

By committing to involvement in Afghanistan through the 2001 Article Five invocation, the Europeans had however indicated their willingness to move NATO not only 'out of area', but also a willingness to move the Alliance 'out of region'. Although the Alliance did not participate in the war against the Taliban, they did enter the scene in the subsequent peacekeeping following the war through the International Stability and Assistance Force (ISAF). The role of the Alliance within ISAF has grown steadily since then, with NATO taking the command of ISAF in August 2003, and moving into the unstable Southern and Eastern parts of Afghanistan in 2006.

The mission in Afghanistan is NATO's first major 'out of region' role, clearly reflecting a very real understanding that success in Afghanistan will be a major determinant for the future of the Alliance. Similarly the importance of the success of the NRF should not be underestimated, as the NRF is designed precisely for NATO to be able to participate at short notice in Afghanistan-like situations, where a collection of 'niche capabilities' to match the requirements of the NRF, should hopefully mean that NRF forces can fight alongside US forces (Terrif, 2004, 431). At least on paper therefore it seems that NATO has overcome the important historical aversion to going out-of-area, whilst the futility of aiming for capabilities that can match American capabilities across the board seem to have been realized, leaving the much more realistic goal of having a collective military capability of approximately 20.000 – 22.000 personnel for specific crisis situations. However, as suggested by Elizabeth Pond, the lingering legacy of the Iraq debacle has eroded European trust in Washington's judgement and leadership, and eroded American confidence in Europe's solidarity (Pond, 2005, 55). The sense of purpose that seems present in the EU's strive towards improving its security and defence dimension, simply seems absent in NATO, where the Europeans appear to comply with American wishes without enthusiasm and out of residual fear that the US might still choose to abandon Europe.

## EUROPEAN RESPONSES TO AMERICAN HEGEMONY – SERIOUS CRISIS OR TRIVIAL ‘TIFF’?

The transatlantic relationship has always been delicate, prone to crisis and not always characterized by logical behaviour or rational emotions. This is essentially because the relationship is a political relationship based on shared ideas and values and a strategic commitment for which there is no actual material proof. As a result trust and commitment to the shared values play a key role in maintaining the relationship, which has traditionally been located within the institutional framework of NATO. The apparent reassessment of NATO by the U.S. following the campaigns in the Balkans therefore seemed indicative to Europeans that the essential negotiation processes of the institutional order had come to an end (Ikenberry, 2001). In this connection, it is of little comfort that the relationship appears unchanged within economics and trade, as these policy areas historically have been based on an entirely different tradition based on fierce competition and frequently conflict-based relations. Therefore, as the US-European trade and economic relations have not played the simultaneous role of underpinning the ideational foundations of the Euro-Atlantic community, their relatively healthy state makes little difference to the overall stability of the value based relationship.

The health of the transatlantic relationship is dependent on strategic policy and foreign policy because it is within these policy areas that the essential socialization and persuasion processes of the Euro-Atlantic community have been located. Here it is essential to distinguish between two different categories of policy change; one where the Europeans have responded to the changed structural conditions following the end of the Cold War; and one where Europeans have reacted to the perceived change in the American *management* of its hegemony starting gradually during the wars in the former Yugoslavia, and accelerating with the election of George W. Bush. Both are important for the transatlantic relationship, but in different ways because the two sides of the Atlantic have different perceptions of what constitutes the most major change in the international system. For the Europeans, the important recent ‘critical juncture’ (Finnemore and Sikkink, 1998) is the end of the Cold War, which fundamentally challenged the whole way Europeans approach their own security. This is not the case for the Americans for whom the end of the Cold War symbolized a victory and a reinforcement of existing ideas on how security and strategic issues should be approached. Apart from minor changes of emphasis and urgency, the end of the Cold War did not lead to any specific policy-changes vis-à-vis Europe, except to make it of less importance. The opposite is true about September 11, which most certainly has constituted a critical juncture on the American side of the Atlantic, but much less so on the European side, where terrorism has always been a real threat. This is not to downgrade the atrocity of the violence, but just as the end of the Cold

War was a matter of degree of changed policy in the US as opposed to fundamental policy change in Europe, so 9/11 in Europe was seen as a change in the *degree and scale* of terrorism, but not of its fundamental character or as requiring substantial policy change. As observed by Andrew Moravscik,<sup>9</sup> for the Europeans, the fall of the Berlin Wall is the defining moment of the contemporary era, whereas for the United States, it is the fall of the Twin Towers (Moravscik, 2003, 76). For that reason policy changes in Europe following 11/9 (1989) have a different significance and role from policy changes following the 9/11 (2001). This is a view that was supported by President Bush in the June 2006 EU summit in Austria, where the President stated that: 'For Europe, Sept. the 11th was a moment, for us, it was a change of thinking' (Stolberg, 2006).

Following the official end of the Cold war and the collapse of the Soviet Union, European responses to the now widely accepted structural condition of unipolarity was to further strengthen efforts at establishing in practice the goals set out in the Treaty on European Union (TEU) for a CFSP and eventual framing of a Common European Defence Policy, as well as the creation of extensive frameworks within both NATO and the EU for managing relations with Central and Eastern Europe and as preparation for membership and other forms of association. The changed structural relations also led to more urgent calls for an independent European defence capability within the EU, as the spectre of diverging interests and abandonment seemed less implausible in a strategic environment where Europe was no longer the prime concern of the only remaining superpower.

The other kind of European responses to the perceived changes in US management of its hegemony are completely different in character and have led to widespread confusion and disagreement on how to proceed because the Europeans have not been guided in their policy-making by a significantly changed threat perception – and they have certainly not followed the US in their assessment that terrorism is the major threat to security in the global system, and differ also in how the problem may be solved. Europeans are more concerned with the causes of terrorism, seen as essentially a question of justice and global distribution of wealth, and therefore not a problem that can be solved by declaring war on it. The problem for the transatlantic relationship is therefore compounded by the fact that change has come in several guises; firstly as a major change in American policy *content* as the new Bush Administration had a different view on the importance of a number of multilateral agreements; secondly as a fundamentally changed foreign policy as a result of 9/11; and thirdly as the administration also altered *the way* it conducts foreign policy. The outcome in Europe has been that the issue over how to respond to the changes in the Bush administration's management of global hegemony has generated a level of disunity amongst both EU and NATO countries, which for the

moment does not seem to be healing. Therefore in the current situation where the dynamism in NATO of the 1990s seems to have vanished, the EU in limbo following the rejection of the Constitutional Treaty and with growing popular anti-American sentiments as a result of the war (and 'peace') in Iraq, Abu Garaib and Guantánamo, a unified European response to the changes in American management of its global hegemony seem long off in the distance. Yet without continuing maintenance of the value based relationship through negotiation and persuasion, a vital part of the proper maintenance of value based security communities is being neglected with repercussions that for the moment can only be guessed at, but which certainly holds the potential for the unravelling of the Euro-Atlantic community.

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