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editorial

Dispelling confusion

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Director

One year after the war in Iraq, the EU is still confronted with two major challenges. The first is in Iraq itself, where the US strategy of stabilisation and democratisation is encountering dramatic setbacks. The second challenge arises from the growing terrorist threat to Western interests and citizens, as seen in the terrible attacks in Madrid on 11 March. If one thing is certain in this chaotic environment, it is that the war in Iraq has not made the world safer or the terrorists weaker.

The EU member states have reacted to these challenges with increased cooperation and reconciliation: a revised Action Plan against terrorism on the one hand, a new global political strategy vis-à-vis the Mediterranean and Arab countries on the other. The election of a new Spanish government has helped to overcome the European divisions of last year, including the cleavages over the relationship with the United States and the EU's constitutional future. But this process of EU reconciliation, possibly leading to a more balanced transatlantic partnership, is also producing massive confusion.

■ First, there is confusion over the so-called 'victory' of terrorism. Many have suggested that the downfall of José María Aznar's government was a victory for the terrorists who, with a few terrible bombings, have shown that they can affect and change European policies. This is not only particularly unfair on Spanish citizens (who have long suffered from ETA terrorism while strengthening their democracy over the last twenty years); it is also just not true. It was not the bombings that defeated the government but a mixture of manipulation and intimidation, over three days, which became unacceptable to millions of Spanish voters. Had the normal democratic rules of transparency been respected, it might well have remained in power, in spite of the collective trauma, despair and anger created by the attacks themselves.

■ The second confusion concerns Iraq. The announcement by the new Prime Minister that Spain may withdraw its troops from Iraq is also viewed, in some circles, as a defeat for democracy and a victory for terrorism. This accusation presupposes that the war in Iraq is key in the West's fight against terrorism, which again is highly questionable: one may agree or disagree with the reasons why the United States decided to attack Iraq, but nobody can seriously maintain that it was because Saddam Hussein had links with Osama bin Laden. Even the US administration no longer dares use this argument. Decoupling the issue of Iraq from the fight against terrorism is therefore a question of honesty: being critical of the US intervention in Iraq but at the same time deeply involved in fighting international terrorism is not only possible, it has strong rationale and legitimacy.

■ This brings us to a third confusion, on the management of postwar Iraq and transatlantic solidarity. Many of those critical of a Spanish withdrawal from Iraq tend to forget that the United States is the first country likely to reduce seriously its military presence in that country, for a complex variety of reasons. Even more, it is precisely to allow some US withdrawal from Iraq that the United States is pressing for international support and involvement, possibly even including a NATO mission there. It thus seems difficult to deny Spain the right to do precisely what the United States would like to do, especially when over 90 per cent of the Spanish population are convinced that the war was not the right solution.

■ That said, it would be foolish to conclude that the Europeans, especially those critical of America's arguments for going to war, can simply forget about Iraq. As a matter of fact, stabilising that country has become a security interest for the entire

The Institute and the Union

■ **The Institute language regime.** On 14 January this year the Institute's Board, meeting in Brussels, ruled that from now on the Institute would adopt the 'CFSP language regime'. This means that the Institute will continue to work in either English or French, but will not translate or interpret from one to the other. Publications, including this *Newsletter*, will therefore in future appear in one version only or contain both English and French. However, to reach a wider readership, the Institute may on occasion have publications translated into other languages, including those used outside the EU.

■ **European Security Strategy.** The Institute has published English, French, German, Italian and Spanish versions of Javier Solana's document 'A secure Europe in a better world - European Security Strategy' adopted by the European Council on 12 December 2003. Versions in the other six official languages of the Union will appear shortly.

■ **Europe and Islam.** The reflection group 'The spiritual and cultural dimension of Europe' established by Romano Prodi held a meeting on 'Europe and Islam' on 9-10 January in Paris. The meeting was organised by La République des Idées (Paris) and the Institut für die Wissenschaften vom Menschen (Vienna), and hosted by the EUISS on 10 January (Martin Ortega).

■ **Research.** A 'Group of Personalities' has been working on the foundations of a European Security Research Programme from 2007 onwards. On 15 March, Burkard Schmitt, the Group's rapporteur, presented its findings to the President of the European Commission, Romano Prodi.

Task forces

■ The Institute's **Balkans Task Force** (Judy Batt) met in Paris on 1 March for a conference entitled 'Serbia and Croatia - resurgence of nationalism?'. This brought together about 30 officials and leading experts from across Europe, including from Croatia and Serbia, to assess the meaning of the recent elections in those countries for the prospects of continuing economic and political reform, for the security and stability of the region, and for their relations with the EU.

■ A final meeting of the Institute's **European Defence Book Task Force** (Jean-Yves Haïne) was held on 26 January.

Seminars

■ **ESDP.** 'Flexibility for ESDP: what is feasible, what acceptable, what desirable?' was the title of a seminar held at the Institute (Antonio Missiroli) on 12 January. It took the form of a brainstorming on the latest and future possible developments in ESDP seen through the prism of 'flexibility', shorthand for arrangements that may not concern all members of the enlarged EU.

■ **Information technology.** The Institute (Gustav Lindstrom) organised a first seminar on this subject, 'Information technology in the 21st century: implications for the EU', in Paris on 5 March. Current threats to IT structures were analysed, including potential spillover effects on critical infrastructures.

Institute publications

Chaillot Papers

■ **No. 68: One year on: lessons from Iraq**, by Ron Asmus, Christoph Bertram, Carl Bildt, Esther Brimmer, Marta Dassu, Rob de Wijk, James Dobbins, William Drozdiak, Nicole Gnesotto, Philip H. Gordon, Charles Grant, Gustav Gustenau, Pierre Hassner, John Hulsman, Atis Lejins, Catherine McArdle Kelleher, Andrew Moravcsik, Janusz Onyszkiewicz, Jiri Sedivy, Narcis Serra and Alvaro Vasconcelos; edited by Gustav Lindstrom and Burkard Schmitt (March).

■ **No. 67: From Copenhagen to Brussels. European defence: core documents, Vol. IV**, compiled by Antonio Missiroli (December).

■ **No. 66: Fighting proliferation - European perspectives** by Mark Smith, Bruno Tertrais and Jean Pascal Zanders; edited by Gustav Lindstrom and Burkard Schmitt (December).

Occasional Papers

■ **No. 50: For our eyes only? Shaping an intelligence community within the EU**, by Björn Müller-Wille, (January).

Forthcoming

■ **Occasional Paper No. 51: Crisis management in sub-Saharan Africa: the role of the European Union**, by Fernanda Faria.

Institute publications

continued

■ **Occasional Paper No. 52: Rethinking the Euro-Mediterranean political and security dialogue**, by Rosa Balfour.

■ **ESDP - five years**, a book edited by the Institute, with contributions by M. Ahtisaari, M. Barnier, C. Bildt, E. Brok, R. Cooper, J. Dempsey, L. Dini, J.-L. Gergorin, N. Gnesotto, P.H. Gordon, J.-Y. Haïne, G. Lindstrom, A. Missiroli, A. Navarro, M. Ortega, F. Riccardi, A. Rondos, B. Schmitt, R. Schüwirth, T. Sommer and L. Zecchini, and a preface by Javier Solana.

External publications

Jean-Yves Haïne

Les Etats-Unis ont-ils besoin d'alliés? (Paris: Payot, 2004), 397 pp.

Gustav Lindstrom

'The Moment of Truth for Galileo', *Security Dialogue*, vol. 35, no. 1, March 2004.

Dov Lynch

'Russia's Strategic Partnership with Europe', *The Washington Quarterly*, Spring 2004.

Antonio Missiroli

'European security in flux' (with Gerrard Quille), in Fraser Cameron (ed.), *The future of Europe - Integration and Enlargement* (London: Routledge, 2004), pp. 114-134.

Burkard Schmitt

'Progress towards the European Defence Agency', New Defence Agenda, *Fresh perspectives on Europe's security*, Winter 2004.

Research awards

Visiting Fellows

During the period January to March the following studied at the Institute as visiting fellows:

- Elisabeth Dietl (German), whose research topic was 'Implementing the EU's security strategy in the Middle East';
- Nicolas Jabko (French), 'The EU and multilateralism';
- Rem Korteweg (Dutch), 'The military dimension of the EU-NATO relationship';
- Suzanne Niess (German) 'Assessing Schengen in an enlarged EU';
- Gergana Noutcheva (Bulgarian) 'Europeanisation and conflict resolution: the cases of Bosnia-Herzegovina and Serbia-Montenegro';
- Lada Parizkova (Czech) 'The EU's institutional framework for the fight against terrorism';
- Odette Tomescu-Hatto (Romanian) 'Romania, Moldova and the EU's new border'.

Serbia and Croatia: after the elections

Parliamentary elections in Croatia and Serbia in late 2003 brought the question of nationalism in the Balkans back onto the agenda. In Croatia, former President Franjo Tudjman's party, the HDZ, returned to power, while in Serbia, the Radical Party led by war crimes indictee Vojislav Seselj won the largest share of the vote. In neither case, however, are we faced with a return to the nationalism of the 1990s, which mobilised peoples for violent aggression against each other. In both countries, extremism is fed by hopelessness due to acute economic distress and disillusion with the outgoing governments' ineffectiveness, internal bickering and corruption.

In *Croatia* voters chose the HDZ because they were looking for more effective government. The outgoing coalition was failing to deliver. The HDZ leadership has made a convincing start on reforming the party's image and removing the most compromised politicians from its previous period in power. It also ran a very good election campaign, presenting the image of a modern party with a determined leader ready to pursue a strong agenda of reform, prioritising the goals of NATO and EU accession. Croatian public opinion strongly supports these objectives. Positive signs are the inclusion of representatives of the Serbian minority in the new government, and the HDZ is now taking useful advice from West European conservative and peoples' parties on how to revise its ideology and adapt to the demands of 'Europeanisation'.

The results in *Serbia* are more troubling. An optimist would point to the fact that the democratic parties between them carried off more than 60 per cent of the vote,

while the Radicals won 27 per cent, and in absolute numbers no more votes than in the past. Only at the beginning of its 'transition to democracy', which began late in 2000, Serbia could be compared with, for example, Poland or Slovenia, which both saw surprise electoral successes of unknown 'wild card' outsiders in early 1990s elections. The key problem, however, is deep division and personal animosity between the democratic parties, which seem unable to work together. So the new government - which took two full months to form - is a coalition of three partners led by Vojislav Kostunica's DSS. It is dependent on the parliamentary support of Slobodan Milosevic's Socialists to survive, while the DS party of assassinated Prime Minister Zoran Djindjic remains in opposition.

In both countries, the issue of cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal (ICTY) in The Hague continues to touch raw nerves in national sensibilities. Croatia faces the key challenge of handing General Ante Gotovina over to the court, but he is still widely regarded as a war hero. The HDZ leaders claim to be ready to comply, and unless they do, they will not get the 'green light' from the European Commission on their application for EU membership, expected in April. But will they carry the party's rank-and-file with them? This will be the key test of how far Croatia has gone in recalibrating its national identity to match its sense of a European vocation. The HDZ could well be better placed to deliver on this (and other difficult issues on the reform agenda), precisely because of its credibility and legitimacy as defender of the 'national interest'.

The new government in Serbia is profoundly ambivalent about cooperation with the ICTY, reflecting Prime Minister Kostunica's long-held views. Other parties in the coalition are more willing to cooperate, but for the moment they are prioritising coalition unity in the interests of rebuilding the lost momentum of domestic economic reform. None would benefit from an early election. Meanwhile, another attempt to fill the long-vacant post of President of Serbia will be scheduled for May/June. The Radicals are optimistic about their chances of winning this time - their candidate, Tomislav Nikolic, came top in the last ballot on the Presidency in November. That was invalid, however, due to a turnout of below 50 per cent, but now the election law has been amended to remove the turnout requirement. So it is absolutely vital for the democratic parties to field a common candidate who can muster the support of all their voters. This has become much harder after the bitter mud-slinging of the past few months.

The government will be hard put to show any success stories to impress the voters by May. Reluctance to comply with the ICTY will further delay integration with the EU and NATO. And the economic situation will get worse before it gets better. Even if it was poverty and an inchoate sense of grievance that fuelled recent support for the Radicals, the old nationalist agenda is not yet dead. The awful events of this March in Kosovo have handed the Radicals a further electoral asset that they are ready to exploit to the full. ■

Judy Batt

On-line/http

All of the Institute's publications and reports on seminars can be accessed on the Institute's website:

www.iss-eu.org

Briefings

On 15 January the Institute hosted a discussion for a group of Turkish officials and researchers, led by Philip H. Gordon (Brookings Institution), on 'ESDP/NATO/ European security - what development for Turkey and Turkey-Europe relations?'. The Institute's research team discussed nuclear proliferation and security issues with a delegation from North Korea visiting Europe, on 2 March.

Russia: quo vadis?

The results of Russia's presidential elections on 14 March held no surprises. Turnout was registered at 61 per cent. The incumbent Vladimir Putin received 71 per cent of the vote, followed far behind by the Communist Party candidate, Nikolai Kharitonov (13.8), Sergei Glazyev (4.1) and the liberal Irina Khakamada (3.9). The victory confirmed three points. First, the contrast between the high emotion of the 1996 presidential elections that led to Boris Yeltsin's second term and the striking calm of Putin's bid for a second term reaffirms that Russian politics has become phlegmatic. Second, the poll, however it is interpreted, confirms the undisputable popularity of Vladimir Putin; he has the support of the great majority of Russians. Third, there is no opposition to speak of. The Duma elections in December 2003 provided the pro-Kremlin party United Russia with a majority of seats in the parliament. Faced with such loss, no opposition party put forward a first-rank candidate for the presidential bid: Irina Khakamada was the surprise liberal figure; Gennady Zyuganov avoided representing the Communist Party, as did Vladimir Zhirinovskiy. Putin ran unchallenged.

■ International views may be summed up in one sentence: the elections may have been free but they were not fair. The OSCE concluded that the elections were 'well administered' but lacked elements of a 'genuine democratic contest'. The EU Council noted its concerns over opposition candidates' lack of fair access to the

media. Comments by pundits were less restrained. Putin is everywhere presented as Russia's new Tsar, who has eliminated all institutions that might check or balance his power, from Russia's regions and republics to the media, the oligarchs and the Duma. Putin's change of government on 24 February confirmed the picture, with the appointment of an unknown bureaucrat, Mikhail Fradkov, as the new Prime Minister. Putin holds all the reins. While the substance of international opinion is beyond dispute, the tone is questionable. Developments in Russia do raise worrying issues. The level of civil liberties has declined since 1999, the war in Chechnya remains a blight and the absence of any serious opposition to the leadership is a concern. However, the elections did not produce a fraudulent result. It is worth reiterating that Russians elected the man they wanted to elect.

■ With good reason, many Russians argue. In 1999, when he became Prime Minister, Putin inherited a Russia on the verge of collapse, with restive regions and republics, a separatist Chechnya, an economy barely recovering from the 1998 rouble crash and empty coffers. Consider 2004: the Russian state is no longer in question, central power has been restored, the economy has grown for the last four years, the budget is balanced and salaries are paid on time. Putin has brought stability to a new state that has been buffeted by storms since 1992. Russians are aware of the costs of the new order, and accept them, preferring Putin's 'democracy

within limits' to Yeltsin's 'democracy without restraint'.

■ Yet, in 2004, the questions remain the same as in December 1999. Who is Vladimir Putin? Where is he taking Russia? The Russian president holds pre-eminent power in his hands and faces a unique opportunity to transform Russia. In his first term, he may have stabilised Russia, but what does his second term hold? In reply to a question about his place in history, at a press conference following the election, Putin admitted: 'As for whether I'm ready for my place in history - no I'm not'. His place in history is uncertain. Having been the 'great stabiliser', will he become a 'great transformer'? If so, all of his work remains ahead.

■ Nor is Russia's relationship with the EU clearer. The presidential elections occurred simultaneously with a review of the EU's Russia policy. 2004 marks a turning-point in EU-Russian relations, with enlargement, the expiry of the EU's 'Common Strategy' and the launch of its 'Wider Europe' project. The moment for a review is opportune. Never have EU-Russian relations been so strained and never has the lack of substance at the heart of the declared 'strategic partnership' been so evident. The more Brussels and Moscow realise the real - as opposed to the simply declared - importance of the other, the more their relations are marked by friction. A period of pushing and shoving in the dark lies ahead as each works out the place of the other in its own plans.

Dov Lynch

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international community, and formulas must now be worked on, with the UN and regional partners, which could help prevent all types of worst-case scenarios, in and arising from Iraq. Still, again, any further confusion between this unavoidable cooperation for the sake of Iraq and some kind of ex post facto legitimisation of the war itself must be avoided.

■ For the United States, and the EU and its individual member states, a final challenge emerges from all this: at a time when the

terrorists themselves have their own communication strategy and are eager to exploit the complexity inherent in all democracies, could it be that our societies find themselves forbidden to express their disagreement, to criticise their leaders or to peacefully impose domestic or international changes just because such criticism or changes could be perceived, erroneously, as a victory for terrorism? Is it not precisely the honour of democracies to reject these most perverse arguments? ■