



## **2003 Transatlantic Conference: The EU and the U.S.: Partners in Stability?**

Organised by:  
EU Institute for Security Studies

Paris, 22-23 April 2003

**De cette première conférence transatlantique après la guerre en Irak, dont on trouvera ci-joint un compte rendu rédigé par Gustav Lindstrom, cinq messages me paraissent devoir être retenus :**

- 1) L'Amérique est différente de tout ce que les Européens ont connu jusqu'à aujourd'hui. Cette différence est profonde, structurelle, probablement irréversible. Elle tient essentiellement au traumatisme créé par les attentats du 11 septembre et à une perception de la menace totalement différente de ce qu'elle était avant le 11 septembre. Les Européens ont énormément de difficultés à comprendre l'ampleur de cette révolution américaine.
- 2) Le consensus est plus grand, entre Conservateurs et Démocrates américains, que les Européens se le figurent. Certes, il existe des nuances sur la tactique, la méthode, le style adoptés par les néo-conservateurs au pouvoir. Mais pour l'heure, du côté américain, les convergences l'emportent sur la vision du monde, sur les menaces contre l'Amérique, et sur le rôle de la puissance américaine dans le monde. C'est donc une illusion européenne que de croire qu'il existe aux Etats-Unis une réelle alternative à la politique des Républicains.
- 3) La crise transatlantique est grave, sérieuse, inédite dans l'histoire de l'Alliance, à tel point que même les discours officiels américains hésitent désormais à répéter les couplets traditionnels sur les valeurs communes et les intérêts communs. La différence entre la perception américaine de la menace et la perception des Européens relève d'un véritable gap, qui ne cesse de s'agrandir.

- 4) Certes, les possibilités de coopération et de partenariat euro-américains demeurent. Pratiquement tous les participants, européens et américains, ont chanté les vertus du pragmatisme en proposant différentes listes de sujets de coopérations possibles. Mais du côté américain ces partenariats relèvent plus désormais d'une « business attitude », d'une culture d'actionnaires froids, que de l'ancienne « romance » transatlantique.
- 5) Du côté européen enfin, le message le plus fort est venu de l'Allemagne : il n'y aura aucune faille, aucun découplage dans le couple franco-allemand en dépit de la tentative américaine – décrite ouvertement par certains participants – d'isoler la France en cassant la solidarité construite entre Paris et Bonn. Le paysage européen est d'ailleurs extrêmement fracturé : les divisions entre les gouvernements européens dominent la scène politique alors qu'inversement l'intervention en Irak a suscité l'émergence d'une opinion publique européenne unie dans l'opposition à cette politique.

**Nicole GNESOTTO**



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The April 2003 transatlantic conference focused on the lessons from Iraq, current avenues for cooperation between the United States and the EU, and the state of the transatlantic relationship. Represented among the eighty participants were government officials, diplomats, policy-makers, think tank representatives, and academics. This report summarises the main topics of discussion and is organised under separate headings.

### U.S. policies post-Iraq

In the aftermath of Iraq, the Bush administration will continue to pursue policies characterised by limited caution—focusing on the ends rather than the means. An American speaker characterised such policies as “triumphalist” and consistent with the U.S. vision of the post-cold war environment where threats are considered more ambiguous. Pre-emption is no longer a covert measure and deterrence, in its traditional sense, is no longer perceived to be effective. According to an American panel speaker, given these trends, it “will be difficult to have pragmatic cooperation across the Atlantic, especially concerning Iraq, even though it is desirable.”

Several American participants underscored that parts of the U.S. administration views international bodies such as the UN with suspicion. They perceive it to be an undemocratic institution (given some of its members) that reacts too slowly to handle current global challenges: “it takes at least 3-6 months for something to happen after a resolution is passed.”

Echoing this sentiment, a European participant observed that Americans presently seem to be “autistic”—not really listening to concerns originating outside the United States. Another participant pointed to the administration’s rhetoric, and how the simplicity and divisiveness of the language used (“you are with us or against us”) complicated transatlantic relations. Summarizing these viewpoints, a European speaker noted that the United States “seemed different or more unpredictable.”

## The effects of 9/11

According to several American speakers, the United States is indeed different. The change can be traced back to September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001, when the United States was shown its own homeland vulnerability.

An American speaker noted that September 11<sup>th</sup> has given the United States legitimacy to proactively take measures to stop future attackers. Curbing the spread of weapons of mass destruction is just one way of achieving this objective. Another is to push for the political liberalisation of the Middle East to diminish the presence of fundamentalism. In addition, acting against “failing states” is thought to be important to deny terrorists a physical haven.

The September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks also raised concern over the type of future attacks. The U.S. concern is a terrorist attack using weapons of mass destruction. The measures taken domestically against these types of threats are impressive. According to one American speaker, every hospital in the United States—regardless of location and size—has taken steps to ensure an adequate response in the event of a biological or chemical attack.

## European division

With respect to Europe, a couple of speakers argued that the current division within Europe (particularly among EU members) is more serious than that across the Atlantic. Similarly, a couple of American speakers argued that the U.S. did not really need to “divide” the EU member states as Europeans did that best themselves. This argument was countered by some Europeans who indicated that the U.S. does promote divisions on the fringes by encouraging certain member states to consider specific actions on particular issues—primarily through bilateral means.

Beyond a common European vision, some participants noted the importance of having a core of European nations sharing similar goals and objectives. One pointed out the need for strong cooperation between France and Germany. In his words, the “Franco-German partnership is necessary for Europe.” Having a core group of nations moving forward on a particular issue was not necessarily seen as divisive. On the contrary, such cooperation could open the way for others to join in at later stages (the example of Schengen was cited).

## Handling post-war Iraq together?

While some participants noted that Iraq was too divisive to allow a solid transatlantic strategy, several attendees argued that there was a real need to come up with a joint strategy for Iraq—regardless of differences.

Three main strategies were identified for handling transatlantic relations post-Iraq. While not mutually exclusive, they highlight the difficulties facing both sides vis-à-vis a joint strategy:

- 1) *Divide and conquer strategy*: This strategy comes in a variety of combinations and shapes, aiming to achieve a conscious division of partners. Two examples were cited. First is the possibility that the U.S. and U.K. work together to decouple France from Germany (and Russia). Second, France and Germany can pursue a similar strategy to force the U.K. to choose between the U.S. and the EU—thereby hoping to alienate the U.K. from the United States. In the end, the more influential side could superimpose its own strategy for Iraq.

- 2) *Workaround strategy*: Instead of looking for ways to cooperate on Iraq, the U.S. and EU could decide to focus their collaborative efforts on less divisive issues such as fighting terrorism. The U.S. and its allies would take the lead on reconstructing Iraq.
- 3) *Compromise strategy*: Despite differences in approach, the United States and Europeans agree to push for a democratic Iraq and take the necessary steps to make that happen. This would serve to enhance current relations and open the door to normalising relations.

With respect to post-war Iraq reconstruction, an American panel speaker offered three specific models:

- 1) *Japan-model*: This entails a substantial resource investment in Iraq to ensure that Iraq prospers over the long run. The speaker thought that President Bush best represented this strategy since it was consistent with his view that the United States was “in it for the long haul” (unlike the neo-conservatives whom the speaker said seemed to think that this could be done in 6 months).
- 2) *Afghan-model*: Under this strategy, the objective would be to create a fairly stable and representative Iraq. Given a much smaller investment, the aim would be post-war stabilisation. This seems consistent with Rumsfeld’s vision of a post-war Iraq.
- 3) *Balkan/Bosnia-model*: While the war in Iraq was carried out by a coalition of the willing, the reconstruction phase would be multilateral in nature. This would include the involvement of international organisations such as the UN and possibly NATO. The reconstruction phase would require a significant amount of time. This approach seems to reverberate best with Europeans.

#### Prospects for division and cooperation

Besides the divisive issue of Iraq, several other important challenges are looming around the corner. Two noteworthy examples are how to best deal with Iran and the concept of pre-emption.

- Concerning Iran, it may be the next showdown where the United States and the EU are split concerning objectives and approaches. According to U.S. participants, the U.S. takes Iran’s non-compliance with the non-proliferation treaty seriously. It is also concerned by Iran’s labelling of the U.S. as the “great Satan”.
- Relating to Iran (and North Korea) is the matter of pre-emption. While pre-emption is now a part of the U.S. policy toolbox for dealing with certain international challenges, Europeans have not fully considered its applicability. While it is unlikely to become part of a European toolbox, some European participants wondered if there was a role for pre-emption, perhaps in the area of non-proliferation.

In spite of divergences on how to deal with these issues, conference participants generally agreed on the need to act as partners. According to a European participant, “differences do not prevent strategic interests.” The links, especially in the economic realm, are a testament of the importance of the relationship. One speaker noted that the United States and the EU together make up 40% of the world economy, represent one-third of world trade, and stand for 90% of humanitarian assistance. In spite of how things develop in Iraq, there are a host of

areas for cooperation that should be stimulated. Several areas of cooperation were identified, including:

- *Cooperation on the Arab-Israeli conflict:* The quartet's road map represents a potential vehicle for pragmatic cooperation and peace in the Middle East. The EU and United States need to work closely to ensure the implementation of the roadmap.
- *Cooperation on the NATO Agenda:* The November 2002 Prague meeting needs to be followed-up with practical efforts to fulfil its agenda. This includes reforming the NATO command structure, obtaining expeditionary capabilities (such as airlift, sealift, precision-guided munitions), and setting up the NATO Response Force (NRF).
- *NATO/EU cooperation:* Following the Berlin-plus arrangement, both sides should take further steps to strengthen their links. The successful takeover of NATO's Allied Harmony in Macedonia by the EU (through Operation Concordia) is viewed as a positive step in the right direction. A future test will be transitions in Bosnia.
- *Common agenda for third countries:* Include the set-up of common agendas for Russia, the Caucasus, the Ukraine and other countries.
- *Cooperation against terrorism:* Currently progressing smoothly, this type of cooperation needs to continue.
- *Cooperation in non-proliferation field:* Emerging as a critical area of cooperation, several outstanding factors need to be revisited. These include the role of pre-emptive force versus the use of international regimes to curb weapons of mass destruction. Specifically, how far will the U.S. go with international regimes and how much of a pre-emptive strategy (and under what circumstances) is acceptable to Europeans? A common European vision is needed to handle this challenge and strengthen cross-Atlantic relations.
- *Cooperation in the development field:* Continuing commitment for international development through mechanisms such as the G-8 and the Millennium Challenge Account. A couple of speakers noted the need to focus more on the southern hemisphere to stimulate democratisation, development, and trade. Specific references were made to Africa (where a great challenge is AIDS).

## Conclusion

An implicit U.S. message coming out of the conference was the need for a more "business-like" relationship across the Atlantic (meaning that disagreements, while part of the relationship, should not dominate it). Gone are the Cold War days when the relationship could be sustained on "auto-pilot". As such, determined efforts are required to maintain a stable partnership; otherwise, "we will have a serious rift." From the EU side, a common perspective or vision is increasingly important to strengthen the partnership.

**Gustav LINDSTROM**

## France 'open' to a NATO role in postwar Iraq

By Joseph Fitchett (IHT)

Thursday, April 24, 2003

**PARIS:** In a new hint of flexibility from Paris in its stand-off with Washington on the status of postwar Iraq, President Jacques Chirac has told the White House that France is "open" to a possible role for NATO in Iraq, French and U.S. sources said Wednesday.

They said that Chirac had raised the possibility in a telephone conversation with President George W. Bush on April 15 in which the two men spoke directly to each other for the first time since their clash about a United Nations Security Council resolution that would have endorsed the invasion of Iraq.

Since the war, the Bush administration has rejected calls from Paris for the United Nations to be given the lead in Iraq's reconstruction. A NATO presence might provide an alternative, at least for peacekeeping, spreading the burden and providing the legitimacy of a multilateral organization representing 19 democracies, including France.

For the moment, the NATO suggestion was only a glimmer on the diplomatic horizon, but Paris seemed to signal a thaw in its hostility to U.S. policy by even broaching it, diplomats said.

Already last week, a day after the phone conversation between the two presidents, France surprised other allied governments by agreeing that the North Atlantic Treaty Organization should take charge this summer of the international peacekeeping force in Afghanistan.

Discussion of NATO in Iraq would be much more controversial, and officials in Paris were quick Wednesday to hedge it with conditions, calling it "hypothetical" and noting that French forces would never enter postwar Iraq for peacekeeping without a UN resolution covering their role.

Politically, however, Chirac's readiness to explore the idea was welcomed by an experienced former U.S. diplomat, James Dobbins, who said that the offer amounted to "an opportunity that the Bush administration should seize on fast as a significant gain in international support for U.S. policy in Iraq and potentially as a useful asset" in managing future uncertainties in the Iraqi transition.

Dobbins was one of several U.S. and French sources who confirmed Chirac's initiative and discussed NATO's potential in Iraq at a conference in Paris attended by serving U.S., French and other European government officials. The meeting, sponsored by the European Union Institute for Security Studies, barred reporters from identifying individual participants for publication, but Dobbins, now a director at the Rand Corporation, a leading U.S. research institute, agreed to be quoted on the initiative.

Bush policymakers in Washington could not be reached for their reactions. But there were reports in Washington on Wednesday of a White House meeting to discuss "punishing France" for opposing the war, notably by reducing France's role in NATO. That approach by hard-liners would exclude French forces from any allied peacekeeping in Iraq.

## U.S. to Europe: 'Who wants allies?'

Trans-Atlantic angst

By **William Pfaff** (IHT)

Saturday, April 26, 2003

**PARIS:** Washington's vow to punish France for blocking UN approval of the Iraq war echoes President Jacques Chirac's threat this year to the European Union candidate-members who supported Washington on Iraq: Both cases recall how dissent used to be handled in the Warsaw Pact.

Secretary of State Colin Powell made his threat to France on the day **the European Union Strategic Studies Institute held its semiannual conference on trans-Atlantic issues. The conference confirmed that such pressures are having negative effects in both "old Europe" and "new Europe."**

Retaliation for resisting the United States is a novel development in a NATO alliance supposedly composed of equals. But it seems to be of little consequence since - as this conference generally agreed - not much is left of the NATO alliance. Its security guarantees to the new members in Central and Eastern Europe will presumably survive, and there is new Washington interest in installing its military bases in those regions.

The "new Europeans" are probably wise to want those U.S. bases. They are a better guarantee of Washington's protection than promises, which these days tend to become forgotten. Neoconservative Washington has shown itself inclined to cancel treaty commitments when they become inconvenient. That's playing hardball.

In the past these EU-U.S. strategy meetings were usually occasions for American policy specialists and officials to give themselves a Paris weekend while conveying Washington's expectations of its European allies. It was the Romans keeping their Greeks in the picture.

This time, American participants told the EU meeting that Washington neither needs nor particularly wants allies.

The Europeans were told that they went too far in opposing the United States on Iraq. Something has broken, and there will be consequences. It was not only government opposition in "old Europe," but public and press opposition in new, as well as old, Europe that angered the Bush administration.

Western Europe is unimportant and irrelevant, the more severe of the meeting's American participants warned. Europe is economically stagnant, in demographic decline and militarily insignificant.

Apart from a few specialized units available for Pentagon use, NATO is of minimal value in composing the mission-defined coalitions of the future.

European participants were at the same time told - once again - that Europe must spend a lot more on arms to count in the world. This American emphasis on military capabilities as the measure of "relevance" comes in tandem with the argument that America is so powerfully armed that it doesn't need any help.

Governments that want to be "relevant" and have influence in Washington were advised not to bargain ahead of time, as Turkey did, but to back the United States from the start of a crisis, and afterward ask for a favor. President George W. Bush might then fly to Belfast for them, as he did for Blair.

People in Washington listen to Blair, the meeting was told. They don't pay much attention to what he says, but they like him on television with Bush. He is on the team. They did not add that on television he explains American policy more clearly than the president does.

Europeans at the meeting countered with the "soft power" argument. They said that Europe today deploys much more economic influence, diplomatic and developmental experience, skills in nation-building and peacekeeping, and cultural attractiveness than the United States does.



While there was no Rumsfeldian belligerence at the meeting, there was an angry undertone in much of what was said. The Americans were told that Washington's efforts to split Europe will backfire. Even German trade union resistance to German structural reform was said to be breaking down because the unions see that Europe is under U.S. challenge.

Europe's commitment to unity and multilateral action was defended as a matter of principle. A German editor said to the Americans, "I think you do not understand how much hostility toward you now exists in Europe." This did not seem of much interest. The American speakers seemed more interested in nuclear weapons in Iran, Pakistan, and North Korea - the next countries that need to be fixed.

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