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The Iraqi Catalyst

Recognition of the Iraqi threat to use biological or chemical weapons as a real and direct threat should result in a direct and proportionate use of armed forces against Iraq, i.e. intervention as an act of self-defence by the states which consider themselves to be in danger. However, they will also justify the intervention by the failure of Iraq to disarm as demanded by the U.N. Security Council, which results in something different than self-defence against the real and direct threat of an Iraqi attack. The real reason for intervention may be only the desire to topple Saddam Hussein and the need to respond to the attacks of September 11. At any rate, the formulation of a policy towards Iraq is part of a larger development and Iraq has become a catalyst for broader processes, including cooperation within the EU.

Nearly all the highly and medium developed European countries are integrating in a parallel system under two institutions: NATO and the EU. The need to integrate within these two institutions is a result of diverse sources of integration, and brings about a continuing high degree of differentiation between the integrating states. The result of this parallel integration process in Europe is well-known: the connection between NATO and the European communities has enabled long-term economic expansion on a large scale, and the economic successes in turn have led to an increasingly greater integration of the states.

However, the current situation within the EU is characterised by a very high degree of interstate cooperation and narrow cooperation in the making of Community policy. Further integration requires broadening the scope of common policy. This

applies primarily to the sphere of the EU which is the equivalent to the external function of a member state (including, in particular, diplomacy and defence and security policies) and which, as yet, has not been developed within the EU. If the EU is to develop such functions as a community, a solution needs to be found to the problems resulting from the integrative parallelism, i.e. functioning of the integrating states within both NATO and the EU.

The creation of EU institutions responsible for foreign, defence and security policies is further stimulated by actions taken by the USA. Following the collapse of the USSR the USA has become the world's only superpower, but its hegemonic position is now questioned to an extent unknown in the bipolar world age, when its leadership was a prerequisite to the effectiveness of the policy of containment towards the USSR.

The current tensions within the EU between Germany and France, on the one side, and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and many other EU states on the other, which appear most conspicuously in the issue of Iraqi intervention, do not in fact relate to the issue of Iraq but rather to the manner in which the EU member states are to establish their relations with the USA as the hegemon of the world system and the main force in NATO. We should note however that there is no tension in policing the world system, as can be seen in the Prague decision of the leaders of the NATO member states on the territorial extension of the NATO potential theatre of action. The leading EU states agree with the USA that their joint action is required, but do not agree on how to reach such common ground. When President George W. Bush makes specific demands on the Iraqi regime, he is not only after Iraq. What is at stake is the position of the USA in the world and his own presidency, which is everything. When he says that the USA will not allow any state in the world to become more powerful than the USA, he does not reject the EU but invites the EU member states to join him, albeit as junior partners. On the other hand, when France and Germany refuse to accept a resolution providing for a direct attack on Iraq, they are not rejecting the United States of America, but rather presenting their independent assessment of the threat and emphasising the need for prior exhaustion of all other means to resolve the conflict. And along the way, which should be most strongly emphasised, indicating their wish to participate in the world leadership.

France's imperialism did not end with decolonisation. Now France defines its position in relation to the hegemon, which also

requires it to emphasise its distance towards the less developed EU states (including EU candidate countries), if only through arrogant comments. France may aspire to present itself as the leader of the Europe which understands the Arab world and constitutes for the Arabs an alternative to the USA. President Chirac has known Saddam Hussein personally since their cooperation in the Iraqi-French nuclear programme (1973) and he knows him well. Chirac's personal attitude to the Iraqi government is, therefore, of exceptional importance in the French policy, which will be revealed by historians once they gain access to the archives with documents on contracts, loans, and licences for technical patents. If only Saddam wanted to emigrate to France! However, one should keep a sense of proportion in everything. The current position of the French government is a dissonance, but it matters a lot less than the decision of Charles de Gaulle's government, which in the age of Cold War confrontation replaced the NATO (i.e. American) nuclear forces with the French *Force de Frappe* in French strategy, withdrew the French navy from the NATO command structure, and finally in 1966 withdrew France from the NATO military structure.

Germany is also defining its role by completing the construction of a new identity of the German state based on lessons drawn from history as much as on its economic strength. Critics of the German government's stance should ask themselves whether they would rather wish Germany to press for an international military intervention. Chancellor Schröder's response is rooted in the old tradition of German Social Democrats, the stance of "the greens", and the political philosophy of the Allies in 1945, expressing Germans' contemporary ambitions in an unexpected manner according to most foreign observers. By presenting itself as an opponent of military action, Germany, which is burdened with historical experiences, is building its new identity. If parliamentary elections in Germany were held now Mr Stoiber would probably win, but after the elections he would probably also assume a similar stance. Despite their disagreements Germany remains an ally of the USA. Germany has only recently assumed command of the peace-keeping forces in Afghanistan and ten thousand Bundeswehr soldiers are on duty in Bosnia and Kosovo under the NATO flag. Germany will be an ally, but no longer a vassal.

In the absence of a common position of the Fifteen, the letter of the eight leaders and the later statement of the Vilnius Group in support of U.S. intervention signalled that the creation of a common foreign policy in the enlarged EU would not be driven

solely by the French-German engine. The debate in the Security Council also shows that the opinions of the government-signatories to the above letter can directly influence the decisions of the Security Council. This was most visible in the speech by the representative of Spain, the country which initiated the letter of "the Eight", but is burdened with the Basque problem, which is defined by Madrid in terms of terrorism.

Poland can play a constructive role for two reasons. First, as a future EU member Poland can more actively make use of the Weimar Triangle by proposing joint definitions of enhanced cooperation projects (through institutions developed by the Nice Treaty) and initiating consultations more frequently, while at the same time showing that it is not a Trojan horse, or a party to donkeyish undertaking. In addition Poland can make use of its very good relations with Britain and involve the governments of other EU member states (and future member states), together with the British, in perfecting a formula for EU-USA relations (among other things through institutional limitations of the negative consequences of NATO/EU parallelism).

Secondly, our government can use its very good relations with America to explain in Washington that the US administration is not faced with a wave of anti-Americanism by ungrateful Europeans, but rather an increasingly strong position of the EU states, and that our common goal should be mutual EU-USA accommodation. Development of a common position, or an EU-USA tandem, is the best long-term solution.

The strength of the European Union is not only determined by its economy. The attractiveness of the European model of integration is becoming more and more important, and the success of this integration is actually a consequence of the safe conditions provided for the integration by America's involvement in Europe's defence. The attractiveness of European integration is a result of the appropriate combination of military strength with common efforts across national borders. How far could such a formula take the EU and the USA, acting together?

At this very moment governments world-wide, including ours, must urgently answer the question: how should we behave in the face of the Iraqi danger?

I will reiterate an opinion which I expressed as early as last July (*The Polish Foreign Affairs Digest*, Vol. 2, No. 3 (7), 2002, p. 6) that our government should cooperate with the United States and the EU

states in order to avert the danger by all possible means, including military action in the event of a real and direct threat—even without the approval of some permanent Security Council members.

The USA and the UK, as well as France and Germany, all agree that the policy of Saddam Hussein poses a threat and that such a threat is real. Their opinions apparently differ, however, as regards whether that threat is direct, although this term is not used in the Security Council debate. This term is not used, even though the direct nature of any threat constitutes a criterion for defence action—at least Jack Straw should say that! Nevertheless, Americans and the British try to convince the Security Council that military force needs to be used in a pre-emptive strike against an Iraqi attack and thus avert such a danger. The French respond that other means need to be fully exhausted first, and are unclear about the role of military action. As a rule, Germans are against any intervention. In the meantime, peaceful measures have not been of much avail for many years, even though they have been pursued in circumstances of increasing military pressure.

The USA also must think about the security of oil supplies. All countries, including France, Germany, China and Russia, need to consider their relations with the Arab states, and in particular their economic relations. Some EU states are also faced with an increasing number of Muslims in their populations (currently 15 million). There is also the problem of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and in this regard one needs to prepare to confront many a government throughout Asia and the Middle East.

We are coming to accept that human rights are gradually changing the concept of sovereignty as sanctioned in international law. Intervention in the event of their breach must not be confused the struggle against terrorism. If the Chinese government, which is faced with the Uighur ETIM (East Turkestan Islamic Movement), and the government of the Russian Federation, trying to solve the Chechnyan conflict, consider their policies in question to constitute the most important element in their attitude to action against the Saddam Hussein regime, they will vote against any intervention in Iraq, all the more so as they dislike the model of a unipolar world. China, however, is no longer intent on questioning the world order, but in trying to find its place in it. The division in the Security Council could be of secondary importance for China, unless it had to support the USA as the only permanent member thereof, which is probably unacceptable to the Chinese as yet. Such a division may,

however, decisively affect the position of the Russian Federation government, which is likely to veto such a resolution so long as the French government does likewise. Besides, no fuss over Iraq is detrimental to Russia's economic interests. High oil prices bring stability to Russian finances.

War has always made a stronger impact on the social awareness of the Europeans than acts of terror. In addition war has always been associated with the state. Seen in this light, Saddam Hussein's aspirations to possess nuclear weapons and the threat of his use of biological and chemical weapons are associated with terrorism. Moreover, the fight against terrorists is not considered as a war against terrorism. Trans-national terrorism will change mass awareness, but this requires time. In every society there are critical degrees of (a) resistance to suffering, and (b) readiness for armed struggle, and in western societies such degrees apparently vary. Mass demonstrations against war with Iraq are in part a consequence of the anti-globalist movements redirecting their attention. They do not translate into support for Saddam Hussein, but they could represent the fear that such a war, especially if not sanctioned by the UN, may evoke a wave of terrorism worldwide. Above all, the demonstrators are convinced that peace is worth nearly any price. On the whole, all people, with the exception of most US citizens, do not consider the Iraqi government and trans-national terrorism as real and direct threats on a large scale, while war is viewed as a general evil. At the same time old anti-Yankeeism is awakened. This may place some governments which are in favour of intervention in a difficult political situation. The fact that U.S. Republicans are less liked in Europe than Democrats is also of relevance.

The debate over the policy towards Iraq does not clearly take into account the fact that this same region is burdened with the problem of relations between Israel and its Arab neighbours. If the intervention in Iraq leads to reconciliation of the rational interests of the main religious groups (Sunnites and Shiites) and ethnic groups (Arabs and Kurds), then the Iraqi catalyst will accelerate changes and improve Israel's situation by stimulating moderate forces and restraining radical ones in the region.

A complication of a different type is connected with the situation of Turkey as a NATO member. Its bases are necessary to carry out a smooth invasion, but the widespread objection to an operation against a neighbouring and Muslim (like Turkey) Iraq may paralyse the recently installed government. The Turkish

government, which has been formed by a moderate Islamic party, needs to reconcile its loyalty to the USA as a NATO member, its EU aspirations, achievement of economic benefits, and a pro-peace stance towards its Muslim neighbour.

Things would look simpler on all fronts if the presentation of American policy itself was more convincing. Its weak points include the insufficient number of individual consultations between the USA and its NATO allies (and Mexico) prior to the adoption of Resolution 1441, lack of evidence to support the existence of a link between the organisation of trans-national terrorism and the Iraqi government (implications which involve the credibility of the accuser), the unclear vision of relations in Iraq and the entire region after the overthrow of Saddam Hussein, and, last but not least, the incomplete analysis of security on a broader scale. However, it should be kept in mind that US policy also has its own dynamics, and the last word about the relations between the President and the military has not been spoken yet.

The question of whether the UN inspectors find weapons in Iraq is not the decisive matter, because it is Iraq that is obliged to disarm and, as a consequence, to prove that it has performed its obligation. However, it should be finally established whether or not Iraq has biological and chemical weapons in considerable quantities. If not, then how long has this been known in the USA? At any rate, the problem of their existence is explored by inspectors, politicians, and journalists. In the event of an intervention, several hundred reporters from the USA and tens of reporters from other countries will be accredited by the Pentagon as war correspondents and some will look for such weapons on their own, which is typical of journalists. If the Security Council does not sanction such an intervention, the opinion will spread that the UN is a replica of the inefficient League of Nations. Even if they do not find weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, the Iraqi catalyst will continue to exert its influence for many years to come. If the intervention is not a surgical operation like a local *coup d'Etat*, in the next five to seven years the American administration will have to spend billions of dollars on the Iraqi venture. That money will go to someone, i.e. to companies to participate in Iraq's reconstruction, unless Iraq meets the same fate as Afghanistan in this regard. For many months the values of stock shares of the largest suppliers of the Defence Department have been going up faster than the average share value of the five hundred largest companies in the USA.

However, it cannot be ruled out that the last moment will bring an overthrow of Saddam Hussein or a collapse of its regime and/or the emigration of the dictator, encouraged to do so by other leaders of the Arab countries. Then the new Iraqi government will proceed to implement the UN resolution, the American administration and its closest allies will proclaim victory and attempt to convince sceptics that it would not have been possible without the exertion of military pressure and diplomatic efforts. One can imagine a strengthening of the UN presence in Iraq through the introduction of an international peace-keeping contingent in order to disarm Iraq as part of a common effort. Each of these solutions would ease tensions within NATO and the EU, contributing to better relations between the allies and facilitating further common discipline within the world system. The intervention in Iraq would be a police operation in accordance with the assumptions adopted at NATO summit in Prague, although without the involvement of NATO itself, which must be first tested in its new role in Afghanistan.

The need to take into account all these various factors should not obscure what is really taking place in the interstate relations within the EU and between the EU states and the USA. The international debate over the policy towards Iraq is primarily an expression of (a) creating a system of common foreign and defence policies within the EU and (b) building the hegemonic tandem of the EU and the USA in the world system and verifying the efficiency of the United Nations in the new conditions in which the world system has come to function. "And furthermore, I believe Carthage must be destroyed."

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