

American, European and Russian Cooperation:
SECURITY AND DEFENCE IN THE 21st CENTURY

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The ramifications of the Iraq crisis are provoking a wholesale reassessment of the post-1945 system of multinational institutions – ranging from the United Nations to NATO and the European Union. Underlying such concerns is America’s use of power and the role it defines for itself in managing its international relations.

These were the themes that dominated two days of wide-ranging discussion at this, the first AMEURUS conference. The issues raised anticipated much of what has now become common currency in international debate. The conference took place while the UN Security Council was still debating a new Resolution on Iraq and before it had become clear whether further UN authorisation of military intervention in Iraq would be obtained. In any event all the participants assumed that war was imminent. Their focus was on the challenges that would emerge in the aftermath of Saddam Hussein’s regime. These would extend far beyond the problems of establishing a viable democracy in Iraq, and even beyond the elusive search for an Israel-Palestinian settlement.

Disquiet was expressed on all sides about the difficulties ahead, with the American participants generally more upbeat while the Europeans were more pessimistic and the Russians reflected unease about their country’s place in the post-Iraq war firmament of nations.

America’s unique position as the world’s only hyperpower was analysed in depth. Fears were expressed that the US might be overplaying its hand. At worst this could be a watershed where the international community would be witnessing the destruction of the multinational framework on which the international system had relied for decades; while at the same time there was no clear vision of what would take its place. At best “the music is not quite as bad as it sounds” – as Marc Twain commented on the music of Richard Wagner. As with the Suez crisis, after an unhappy dip, good relations between traditional allies could resume.

Irrespective of where participants stood on the gloom and doom barometer, several speakers stressed the need for more systematic intergovernmental consultations to take place, to agree common objectives and seek a strategic consensus on the management of relations between the US and its friends. The AMEURUS process was held up as an informal example of the usefulness of exchanging views between members of this Troika and pooling their ideas in pursuit of international order.

SESSION 1: Instability in a world of Great Powers but only one Superpower

Transatlantic tensions: A temporary phase? NATO: The future of the Alliance? New Europe/Old Europe: Where is the common EU Voice? A new security order: New alignments? Economic instability: How can global business contribute to security? Defense industry: unifying and not dividing?

The first speaker, a prominent member of the US Congress, proposed that NATO, in search of new tasks, should offer to send a peacekeeping force act as a buffer between Israel and the Palestinian Authority, inhibit terrorism and help stabilize the region. The force should go there without in any way prejudicing the sovereign rights of the protagonists and should remain until there was a peace settlement. In this role NATO might have a positive impact on the peace process. NATO already had trained personnel for peacekeeping. Members of the Alliance already had close relations with both sides: the US with Israel and the European members of the Alliance with the Palestinian Authority.

There was considerable interest in the idea of NATO peacekeepers for the Middle East more generally and it was suggested that the Russians should be invited to join in such a project. This might be all the more welcome since it was uncertain whether NATO's existing commitments would leave sufficiently large numbers available for deployment in the Middle East.

However, several speakers also pointed to the difficulties in the idea: one participant with close links to Israel argued that it implied equivalence between Israel and Yasser Arafat's Palestinian Authority. In current circumstances the government of Israel was bound to reject the proposal. Another speaker insisted that a peace force should only be introduced if it was sent there as an integral part of a roadmap to a peace accord. Otherwise NATO peacekeepers would only serve to freeze existing divisions, much as has happened to the UN blue helmets in Cyprus. Moreover, there was the risk that the NATO buffer zone might be interpreted by one side or the other as a definition of their contested borders. This concern was echoed by a US participant who argued that peacekeepers normally only go to countries after a peace has been successfully negotiated.

From a Russian vantage point it was argued that NATO was not designed for peace keeping. Moreover, the Alliance had lost its purpose. It should concern itself principally with European security. If NATO remained in existence, then Russia might eventually seek to join. Membership negotiations would help Russia to integrate more closely into European – and would incidentally correct anomalies such as Russia's designation in the AMEURUS process as an entity separate from Europe.

When the discussion turned to the wider agenda of the Session, fears were expressed for the survival of the existing multinational framework of alliances. From a European

point of view it was argued that during the Cold War the Atlantic Alliance was able to resolve issues and maintain a common front because its members were agreed not only on the nature of the threat but also because they readily accepted American leadership. Together they had developed an agreed set of instruments to implement Alliance policies.

It was argued that even now perceptions of the new threat both from terrorism and even from Iraq were far closer than some of the polemics hurled across the Atlantic suggest. The main differences stemmed from disagreement over tactics to counter these threats. In France and Germany there was paramount concern that war against Saddam Hussein would have a negative impact on Muslim opinion and that the terrorist threat would become still more acute. But even if the jury was out on whether military intervention in Iraq would provoke still more terrorism, others argued that the disappearance of Saddam Hussein would at least mean that terrorism had lost an important base.

While Russia for all its economic weaknesses expected to be seen as a superpower, the US today was the uncontested hyperpower. But from both sides of the Atlantic speakers worried that the US Administration was slow to develop a strategy to reinforce world stability. One speaker suggested that the United Nations membership, working together, could become a realistic counterweight to United States power. Elaborating, this participant argued that in this unipolar world, the UN on its own could not produce a solution to the Iraq problem. But equally the US should recognise that it did not have the means to deal on its own with reconstruction and the aftermath of intervention and would have to seek a multilateral solution in the United Nations.

It was essential to have a structured debate between governments to define a strategic consensus for the creation of a more stable world order and to agree on architecture to implement it.

Russia's perspective on the Iraq crisis was described as different both from America's and from the views expressed in Europe. Russia was in a quandary, opposed to military intervention, but keeping a low profile, not wanting to alienate either Washington or its partners in Europe. (It was still unclear during the AMEURUS conference whether there would be a further Security Council resolution on Iraq or how Russia intended to vote.) Russian participants stressed the paramount importance that Moscow attached to its role in the post-Saddam world. What influence would it have? What role would it have in strategic decision-making? Much depended on Russia's relations with the US. Russia feared a clash of interests if the US decided to follow intervention in Iraq with moves towards regime change in Iran.

Moscow would also have problems in cultivating its European relations. It was more at ease dealing with the 'old' European Union countries than with the 'new' ones – now close to the US – who had been members of the Communist bloc and who have given their strong backing to US policy against Iraq. There was a faint possibility that Russia after the Iraq war might be able to help mend fences between Washington, France and

Germany. Russia's search for a meaningful voice in any post-war settlement was further elaborated in the next session.

SESSION II: From the War on Terror to Nation-building

Fighting Terrorism: Can we improve cooperation among the US, Europe, Russia? The special problem of proliferation new mechanisms for enhanced security. Regime change and security: Is it acceptable to promote regime change as a pre-emptive measure against major threats? Conflict prevention and conflict resolution, peace enforcement, peacekeeping and nation-building: unilaterally, in alliance or under the UN?

Interventions during this session served to highlight transatlantic differences over perceptions of the threat posed by Iraq. US speakers all reflected the depth of impact that 9/11 had made on their sense of security. Terrorism had acquired an entirely different character after this watershed event which for the first time involved mass-killing. Terrorists now had access to weapons of mass destruction capable of killing thousands. Would city life be allowed to continue if such acts were repeated? Europeans, it was argued, did not yet understand the full implications of this. They were wrong to argue that because they had lived for decades with IRA and other terrorist organisations, they were already attuned to dealing with this phenomenon. The Europeans seemed to put more emphasis on treaties, institutions and negotiations and less on physical response. Similarly, in the debate about military intervention in Iraq, the Europeans tended to be more concerned about respect for the rule of law than with the threat posed by Saddam Hussein. Americans preferred to act, observed one US participant.

While there was overall agreement on the urgency of international cooperation against terrorism, a variety of views were expressed how this could best be brought about. One European participant suggested in opening the discussion that Russia should be invited to join with NATO to make a detailed analysis of the threats confronting the international community from terrorist groups, from rogue states to weapons of mass destruction. The NATO-Russia Council should be encouraged to work on conflict prevention and conflict solution and should apply itself to the unresolved problems of the Balkans, in the Caucasus and, even though Russia considered it an internal matter, in Chechnya. It was stressed that Europeans held more firmly than the US to the view that the fight against terrorism could only be effective if the root causes of terrorism were understood and addressed. It was also argued that European countries felt more strongly than the US that the proliferation of weapons was best controlled through multilateral arms control measures. Export controls were also vital tools in the fight to prevent the spread of weapons of mass destruction and tackle the root causes of terrorism.

Discussing the causes of terrorism, among both the Russians and the Americans there were some who felt it that it was misleading to link poverty to terrorism. On the other

hand, it was argued from a business perspective that a stable economic environment was a key antidote to terrorism: enlist private capital, develop a strategic oil policy, create conditions attractive to private investment and the ground for terrorism would be less fertile.

One Russian participant added a *caveat*, warning that joint action on anti-terrorism alone could not serve as the basis for closer cooperation between Russia, the United States and Europe. Russia's priority was for the country's economic stability. Its partners must offer economic cooperation. Low oil prices would be devastating for the Russian economy and Russian political stability. Western help would be essential.

From a different angle, one participant argued that the Europeans leaned towards the view that the international community should establish an updated version of UN Trusteeship for failed states: nation-building was an essential antidote to terrorism. The United States did not appear to like such an approach and preferred to rely on military measures against terrorism.

In Iraq, military intervention should be seen not as pre-emptive but as a preventive measure against a threat which much of Europe did not take seriously enough, asserted one of the Americans. Moreover, the US did not put Iraq into the category of 'failed' state. Iraq was a 'rogue' state. The Trusteeship concept could only be applied to failed states unable or unwilling to control terrorism.

Notwithstanding differences in analysis, there was general agreement that the terrorist phenomenon could no longer be neatly divided into national and international concerns. In today's global community, a European participant argued, money, equipment and the terrorists themselves were all able to move across borders. The time had come, however, for all to pull together to develop transnational defences against the terrorist threat.

All this served to underscore proposals put forward by one of the US participants for global cooperation on Homeland Security. The first priority was to arrive at a common assessment of the threat – today even two such close allies as US and the UK did not necessarily reach the same conclusions. Among the priorities for action were internationally-agreed regimes for passport control, and shipping container controls; close coordination of the use of special forces; an improved institutional framework with other countries setting up government departments on the lines of America's new Department of Homeland Security. In resisting terrorism, there had to be better understanding of the limits to the remedies open to individual countries and to multinational institutions. It was also essential to address the clash of interest between civil liberty and civic security.

One European participant pointed out that the UN was already handling many of these issues. However, he agreed that the global terrorist threat required leadership to set up a World Counter-Terrorism Organisation. The nature of the threat had been widely analysed: the priority now was for practical measures and, above all, for leadership.

SPECIAL SESSION: The emerging security threat from HIV/AIDS

The rapid spread of AIDS in Russia was cause for major international concern. President Putin must give a much higher profile to preventive measures against the disease. The US Administration was actively taking steps to help Russia. This was the message brought to the conference by a senior US official.

Yet even though between one and two million Russians were already believed to be HIV positive, and if present trends persisted the numbers would rise towards the 10 million mark, this paled against the horrific spread of the disease in Africa. One European participant pointed to the fact that over 20 million Africans were already dead. Unless the disease was checked, one in four Africans could die from the disease.

In Russia as in Africa, AIDS affects the young and middle-aged and is depriving societies of the people they most need for social and economic reform and political stability. Quite apart from the human misery, the economic implications of the upward spiral of AIDS sufferers was described as terrifying. Even if the US and Western Europe had so far been more successful in checking the spread of the disease, there was no reason for complacency. They, too, were vulnerable to the upsurge in trafficking of women from Russia and Eastern Europe, as well as to the mounting immigration from Africa, Afghanistan and other HIV-high areas of the world. The fight against AIDS had to be undertaken on a global scale.

The US official outlined Administration initiatives designed to encourage and assist Russia in fighting the spread of HIV. She pointed out that there was a considerable discrepancy between Russia's official statistics which listed roughly 200,000 people as HIV positive, and the estimates of medical and academic experts who believed that the number was already between 1 and 2 million. The UN had said that the states of the former Soviet Union had the highest growth rate of HIV infections in any part of the world today. US sources had estimated that Russia could have 8 million more HIV infections in the next decade, equal to 10 per cent of the Russian workforce. As Russia had a declining population, the rapidly spreading AIDS problem had the potential of a major crisis for Russia. The Russian authorities did not yet appear to recognize this. More Russian money had been given to the Global Fund for AIDS than to Russia's own domestic AIDS program. This appeared to reflect a mistaken Kremlin view that the virus mainly threatened other countries, and much less Russia itself.

It was equally misleading for Russia to assume that AIDS only affected the poor and marginalised segments of its population. The virus had spread among the general population. President Putin rarely addressed the AIDS issue in public statements. The US Administration wanted to convince him that he must give the lead in mobilizing the government and Russia's social leadership to give the campaign against AIDS the highest possible priority. Washington was prepared to work more closely with the Russian government on the control of HIV/AIDS, both bilaterally and in a multilateral

framework. But the US official warned that all such efforts would only have limited results until President Putin and the Russian government lent their authority to press the need for action.

There was not a complete Russian response to this as the Russian participant qualified to speak most authoritatively had been obliged by family circumstances to cut short his stay in Washington.

If the growth rate of AIDS in Africa was not now as rapid as in Russia, it was because the victim base was already so much higher, noted a European participant. In Botswana 40 per cent of the population was already infected. Many HIV infected people were moving around Africa infecting more and more areas of the continent. Throughout Africa AIDS had become an affliction. As the working age population was worst hit, armies of orphans had been created. With so many dying, villages could no longer sustain themselves economically. Survivors moved into towns. Rural parts of Africa could become uninhabited.

The outside world could afford to ignore this – both for humanitarian reasons but also for more selfish economic reasons, and for the repercussions of political instability on migration rates from Africa. The international community should certainly do more to make medicines available to AIDS sufferers at cheap prices. But even low cost drugs would be unaffordable for many in Africa. There should also be a policy of assistance to rebuild life at village level: nation building at micro-level.

DINNER AT THE GERMAN EMBASSY

In a keynote speech a senior State Department official outlined an American model of the international system as it was likely to evolve in a unipolar world in which US power far exceeded that of any other nation. The new system would have to reflect American primacy.

The Iraq crisis obviously had implications for the future fabric of multinational institutions. But even without Iraq the nature of the relationship between the US and its allies would be undergoing radical change. It was self-evident that the end of the Cold War would precipitate radical rethinking of the transatlantic relationship. Europe was no longer a key cockpit of conflict. NATO was no longer motivated by concern for European security. The transatlantic consensus on the purposes of NATO had gone. The glue that had held the alliance together had weakened. Iraq had become a watershed for junking old concepts and redefining America's foreign policy priorities. The world had entered a different era.

As Washington rethought its alliances it had to take account of three further important factors: enlargement of NATO had diluted its ability to react promptly to situations and to reach consensus. The US could not accept vetoes. Secondly, enlargement of the European Union had undermined the concept of a single identity and would make it

very difficult for the EU to speak with one voice. Thirdly, Europeans appeared to be far more committed to the United Nations than the US. Europeans saw the UN as an essential component of the new world order. The US, the official emphasized, did not share this view of the world body. Washington saw the UN as just another organisation; not particularly high on its priorities. Europe had to abandon the idea that dialogue per se was always better.

Even so, Washington would need to give Europe, maybe under UN auspices, a presence in post-war Iraq. Countries must not be excluded, this official emphasised, because they disagreed with US over the Iraq conflict. Russia should be brought in as a partner; but he also warned Moscow against trying to see itself as a counterweight to the US.

In the future, the US would be more selective in its handling of global relations. NATO, if it survived, had to be seen either as a holding company or a toolbox. Whichever metaphor was preferred, Washington would choose its partners for each task as it cropped up. Europeans would be useful only to the extent that they accepted US primacy and supported Washington's approach to the problems of the Middle East and elsewhere. As the US reconfigured its international relationships, coalitions of the willing would count for more than existing institutional links. The new system would have to rest on American primacy.

SESSION III: Opportunities and challenges in the Greater Middle East.

Post-Saddam: A democratic settlement in Iraq? Prospects for Middle East peace: Roles for Europe, Russia and the US. New thinking to strengthen stability and security in the Arab world. Enhancing the dialogue between Muslim and non-Muslim worlds.

It was obvious that military intervention in Iraq and the removal of Saddam Hussein would radically change the Middle East. But predictions varied greatly and the interventions during this session merely served to confirm that nobody could be certain how the situation would develop and what opportunities would present themselves for outside powers to promote peace and democracy.

A Russian participant was the first to speak and his focus was more on Russian tactics in the UN Security Council than on future developments. He claimed that Russian policy on Iraq had been ill-defined and that Russia, while voicing opposition to military intervention, should have presented the Security Council with proposals to strengthen international pressure on Saddam Hussein to disarm. Moscow was concerned that military intervention would radicalise the Arab world and that moderate Arab states, such as Egypt, Pakistan, Turkey and Saudi Arabia, would be weakened.

The next speaker, an American, stressed that for the Bush Administration, the Greater Middle East had replaced Europe as the central source of instability in the world.

America's most urgent security problems stemmed from that region. In the past it preferred to see the Arab-Israel conflict as a self-contained problem. Now it knew better. Terrorism and weapons of mass destruction had shown that this conflict could not be divorced from the politics of oil or from the problems of the Persian Gulf or even from South and Central Asia. The Greater Middle East could become an arc of crisis and a new threat to world security. Unlike the more cautious governments of Berlin, Paris or elsewhere in Europe, the US Administration – and Britain – had decided that it was more dangerous not to act than to act now.

The big transatlantic divide, it was argued by one speaker, reflected an underlying reality that much of Europe had become a *status quo* power, clinging to its attractive welfare and lifestyle safety nets and to the fracturing power structure of the Arab world. In contrast, the US saw itself as an agent of radical change in world affairs, and especially in the Middle East. In redefining its vital interests to focus on the threats from the Middle East, the US would reconfigure both its armed forces and its partners. The US would have to establish a military anchor in the Middle East. Significant forces would be stationed in Iraq, while at the same time bases would be retained in Afghanistan and Pakistan. US bases in Europe would lose much of their significance. Countries with the military capability and the will to engage in partnership with the US would need to decide how they fitted into the most sweeping change in the US global presence since the beginning of the Cold War. Increasing strategic divergence, and a shift to bilateralism and unilateralism, would become the hallmarks of the international community.

Even though this approach would have many pitfalls, President Bush and some of his senior aides believe that the US must make a commitment to spread democracy in the Middle East. According to one speaker, they had concluded that world of Emirs, Kings and other potentates cannot be sustained, and that the final components of an Arab-Israeli settlement would be impossible without significant political reform in the Arab world. However, such a process would take much too long according to another participant who argued that Israel required security guarantees and should not have to wait for a settlement until democracy was established in the region.

How to bring about a democratic settlement in Iraq? Democracy, it was argued, could not just be imposed. It had to grow from within; it required a shared identity. Most contributors to the debate stressed that the post conflict situation in Iraq posed far greater problems than the war itself. Military occupation would be essential. But there was divergence over the question whether the military should be put under civilian in control. Collateral diplomatic damage stemming from the deep divisions over military intervention in Iraq could make it more difficult to assemble a post-war coalition to help with reconstruction in Iraq, it was argued.

In any event, postwar Iraq would pose a huge challenge and would require the cooperation of Iraq's neighbours in the Region. One European participant urged that the UN should assemble an international coalition of support for Iraq to provide the resources for the country's reconstruction. As there was a real risk of Iraq fracturing,

this speaker believed that, for the time being, and possibly for a long time to come military government would be necessary. It was far too soon for the US to plan an exit strategy. The military must have full authority without any second-guessing from UN headquarters. There was a word of caution however: while the outside world had great respect for the quality of America's armed forces, it was less convinced about US commitment to the management of post-war situations. Washington would be well advised to spell out publicly its plans for post-war Iraq.

One US participant countered that US thinking on post-war policy in Iraq was in fact much further ahead than some of the Europeans assumed. The removal of Saddam was one step on the ladder towards an Arab-Israeli settlement. The next step after Iraq would be the regimes that sustained Hezbollah: Syria, Iran and Lebanon. Other speakers reinforced the impression that the US roadmap encompassed more than the detailed terms of an Iraq settlement, and included a geopolitical reorganisation of the Greater Middle East. If democracy for the Greater Middle East really was the US goal, then it amounted to a commitment that could take decades, comparable perhaps to the 40 odd years it took to win the Cold War.

Speakers returned to the broader aspects of America's new world outlook. If the US was so intent on establishing its primacy, then the Administration must articulate its ideas more clearly. If it believed that inaction was dangerous, then it must explain how it wanted to act; it must spell out its strategy. It was not enough to send out signals, but should consult with its allies and listen as well as talk. We need a strategy and we need discussion, insisted one European participant. NATO had always been a forum for political dialogue. It should remain so. If the US tried to reduce NATO to a toolbox, then it was unlikely to survive. If collateral damage from the Iraq crisis was to be kept to manageable proportions, then the US needed to engage Russia and the Europeans in its post-conflict strategy.

SESSION IV: Cooperation on Regional Issues

Afghanistan: Unanswered questions? India/Pakistan: Building confidence in the nuclear context. The strategic environment in East Asia: Opportunities to promote stability. Georgia, Chechnya and Central Eurasia: Is there a rule for trilateral cooperation?

This session began with a plea for greater intergovernmental consultation and coordination in dealing with troubled regions. Subsequent interventions reinforced this point. The United States was obviously the key player but European countries and Russia had their own interests and expertise in various regions of the world. This experience must be pooled. The heads of government of the Troika of powers represented at our conference should meet in search of a consensual strategy on regional problems. China and possibly some of the emerging powers should also be asked to join such brainstorming. It was pointed out that China should in any event be drawn more closely into the mainstream of discussion about the management of world

affairs. There should be dialogue with Muslim leaders and more attention should be paid to the problems of the African continent. The same participant asked whether the Quartet whose work was now limited to the Arab-Israel conflict could not also concern itself with the Kashmir issue or even with Chechnya.

Russian participants stressed that President Putin regarded Chechnya as a purely domestic issue and was certain to reject any external involvement in the search for a solution there. They left it open whether militancy in Chechnya should be interpreted as terrorism or as a secessionist movement.

Views differed on the situation in Afghanistan. A Russian participant painted a bleak picture: Afghanistan was now wholly dependant on the outside world, it lacked political will to establish its national structures, and President Karzai had been unable to build up a national army. Sympathy for the Taliban was again growing, especially in the more distant regions where they were missed for their record of establishing law and order. One of the American participants insisted that the reality was not nearly as bad as this.

Instability in Georgia was also discussed by Russian participants. It was asserted that President Putin treated the country as Russia's enemy and wanted President Shevardnadze removed from power. One speculation was that the Russian leader had obtained a green light from Washington to act as he wished against Georgia.

Several participants returned to the theme of anti-terrorism and the aftermath of war in Iraq. The terrorist threat was not yet perceived by the international community as a threat on the scale of the former Soviet threat. One American participant argued that it was up to the AMEURUS Troika to rally the international community behind the war on terrorism. They could not guarantee security; but they could be at the core of an integrated effort to fight terrorism. Nation-building and devising a long-term architecture for democratic societies had to be an integral part of this process. With many obstacles on the way, it would be a long and hard road.

LUNCHEON: Which Way forward for the AMEURUS Troika?

Keynote address

US 'hard' power – its military might – far exceeds that of any other nation today. But this does not make it a unipolar world in which the United States routinely has primacy and can afford to by-pass other nations or multinational institutions. The US is not so all-powerful that it can dictate its own terms and operate on the basis of *a la carte* alliances. It was with this caution that an American political scientist discussed the prospects for a new world order. American leadership after World War II had helped to build up the UN, NATO and other multilateral institutions that formalised discussion and consultation among allies. This had legitimised American power.

Today the world was at a turning point. There was a 50:50 possibility that the Iraq crisis has strained the post-1945 world order to the point of destruction and without any clear indication of what would be created in its place.

The speaker described three schools of thought behind the policy of the present Administration: the old Bushites, patriots who believed in multilateralism and included men like Colin Powell; the pragmatic ‘hegemonists’ including Donald Rumsfeld and Vice-President Cheney, who wanted to ditch the old system and operate US diplomacy on the *a la carte* principle of ‘coalitions of the willing’, but did not seek long-term engagement everywhere, and certainly not in the Middle East; and the neo-conservatives, who were Wilsonian-type idealists of the Right eager to implant democracy world-wide and willing to accept the long-term commitments which that would require. Paul Wolfowitz was the best representative of this group. The outcome of the debate between these three factions would determine how the US decided to use its power: whether it merely sought to assert primacy or once again offer constructive leadership to the international community.

The speaker warned against one-dimensional policy-making. It relied too much on military supremacy and had at its goal an unattainable unipolar hegemony. It ignored the fact that the international community remained multidimensional and ‘soft’ power was becoming more influential around the world, as well as America’s ‘hard’ power.

In the 21st century, power would be distributed differently on different issues. The speaker likened this to a three-dimensional chess game. On the top board the US dominated with military power. Even though Europe could not hope to come anywhere close to matching the United States capabilities, Washington should bear in mind that as in Iraq even modest contributions helped to legitimise military intervention and that European nations could play a crucial role in the aftermath – as was already happening in the Balkans and in Afghanistan.

Economic issues were to be found in the middle dimension of the chess game. The US was in no position to dictate the terms on that board and had to accept the limitations of a multipolar balance of power. The European Union was a powerful player, and trade agreements required compromises on all sides. The US may well prefer the ‘new’ Europe to the ‘old’ Europe. But US private investment in those countries was shrinking, and countries like Poland and Hungary still traded far more with their European partners than with America.

The third dimension of the chess game involved transnational issues that crossed borders outside the control of national governments. They included terrorism, drugs, illegal immigration, crime, HIV/AIDS and the spread of other diseases, and environmental issues including global climate change. Here the exercise of power was severely circumscribed. The US cannot obtain satisfactory outcomes for itself by the exercise of military power or the assertion of unipolarity and hegemony. International cooperation was vital.

Beyond the chess board there were a host of intangible reasons why it was in America's interests to work more closely with Europe, the speaker argued. There were common values, a common culture. America should be concerned that so much public opinion in Europe had become alienated. It should guard against confusing legitimate European criticism with anti-Americanism.

It remained to be seen whether US policy makers would decide to play on all three dimensions of the chess game or risk eventual defeat by relying on the military dimension alone.

Hella Pick
London, March 2003