

The Iraq War: Five European Roles

Stephen Wood, Postdoctoral Fellow,
National Europe Centre

National Europe Centre Paper No. 112

Presented at the National Europe Centre on Friday, 13 June 2003

This paper considers responses from four European states (UK, France, Germany, Poland) to the 2003 Iraq crisis, examining the domestic contexts and international relationships that influenced them. It also analyses how the EU, as a unified or otherwise actor, reacted, with implications for the functioning of its Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP).

Introduction

Among other things, the Iraq conflict and its prelude impressed that the 'diversity' element in Europe's ongoing construction was more prevalent than its foil 'unity'. It also revealed that despite a profusion of academic approaches, theories and recommendations about its evolving characteristics and definition, Europe has not departed a planet where baser or 'traditional' aspects of international relations persist. Iraq 2003 demonstrated that some attributes of the unfashionable 'realist' IR model are not, in practice, yet obsolete: states predominant; perceptions of national (not multilateral) interests primary, including with whom one should be bilaterally close; power politics and tenuous alliances (like Russian proposals for a Eurasian Union to counter the USA, with Russian protection for France and Germany); international anarchy. Concurrently there was a strong socio-political influence of publics and media, in EU member-states, entry candidates, and the USA. This appears to contradict another precept usually ascribed to realism: a separation of foreign and domestic spheres. The foreign policies formulated and implemented in regard to Iraq could not be quarantined from domestic pressures, as the British government in particular discovered. It was governing elites that ultimately determined the respective national course; at the same time they wanted, even craved, public confirmation. Some were aligned with majority opinion (Germany, France); some were not and tried to modify their positions to contain popular protest. Spanish and Italian governments supported the Anglo-American position but did not take part militarily. Polish leaders stressed friendship with the USA and Poland's obligations. In the UK, Tony Blair and Jack Straw impressed humanitarian and moral aspects of eliminating a dangerous tyrant. They presented themselves as a moderating influence on the Americans and referred to a future (imprecise) UN role as war began. Almost everyone said they wanted to prevent a disintegration of the 'transatlantic relationship'. The varying courses taken only increased its likelihood.

A 'European' position, an operational *Common* Foreign and Security Policy, was conspicuously absent. Iraq was a manifestation of pre-existing difficulties in this area.¹ The EU has no shortage of structures, material resources, or instruments. What was lacking is a basic ingredient that pre-dates international institutions and nation-states. It was clearly identified by EU External Affairs Commissioner, Chris Patten:

There is much discussion of institutional changes that could help give European foreign policy more coherence and visibility...Institutions can sometimes help to develop or change political will. But no amount of institutional tinkering can be a substitute for political will. Europe will only have a wholly credible foreign policy when the political will exists to create one.²

Where would this political will come from? Within the European Commission, the European Parliament, or the Secretariat headed by Javier Solana and ensconced in the Council, there is support for a supranational CFSP. Ultimately the pertinent critical mass has to come from member states. Qualified Majority Voting (QMV) is favoured in Berlin. Intergovernmental preferences are foremost in London and Paris. While all exercised some form of resolve and preference regarding Iraq, this did not translate into common European policy. An associated reason why this did not happen is that member states' energies are partly expended *vis-à-vis* each other, wrangling in institutions or extra-European rivalries. The fighting in Iraq was preceded by a protracted 'war of diplomats' with the USA and the Saddam regime as protagonists and others, like Russia, involved. It also pitted current and impending EU members against each other: in the UN Security Council, EU forums, and bilateral exchange.³ It was a 'time of unusual tension, not just in the Middle East, but between allies and within international institutions'.⁴ Christopher Hill has argued that 'We are far from the point where the international system can be accurately characterised by such terms as 'global governance' or 'empire', despite the recent vogue for overarching

¹Brian Crowe "A Common European Foreign Policy after Iraq?" *International Affairs* 79:3 2003 pp533-546.

²Chris Patten "Keynote Address on European Union Foreign Policy", National Press Club, Canberra, 17 April 2003 = National Europe Centre Paper 92 (Canberra: NEC 2003) p6.

³"Der Krieg der Diplomaten" *Der Spiegel* 11, 10 March 2003.

⁴Jack Straw "Foreword" in *Foreign and Commonwealth Departmental Report 2003* (CM5913) (London: HMSO May 2003).

interpretations of this kind.⁵ Even on a European scale, such a definitive regime is not established, not in foreign and security policy. Although signs of international compromise later appeared, reconciliatory gestures between politicians and diplomats after military action in Iraq began were overshadowed by their substantial differences.

Britain

A central component in British foreign affairs is the 'special relationship' with the USA, perhaps the first with this descriptor. With a few standout exceptions (Suez), UK governments have favoured a prominent American role in the world and in Europe. The current one's interest in maintaining it certainly influenced British Iraq policy. In the (first) two phases of the conflict, diplomatic/political and then military, the UK was confirmed as the USA's most longstanding and important ally. Its history as a former global power with a record of intervention is also relevant. Some measure of this is retained through the political preparedness and technical capacity to project military force. Even if its policy directions are opposed, this counters arguments about 'decline'⁶ and emphasises the UK as an international actor that can act. British diplomacy and military upheld a high status during the Iraq crisis, one that impressed that there will be no coherent and effective CFSP without strong British commitment or, more likely, co-leadership.

Sovereignty and independence persist in British thinking on foreign, security and defence issues. Their contemporary usage does not mean the UK is necessarily uncooperative with other EU members. The rhetorical deployment and denotation of these terms is relative to circumstance. Priming the public for a more integrationist orientation, Jack Straw said as Home Secretary after 11 September 2001 that Britain needed to rethink its attitude to sovereignty.⁷ In a speech on 19 May 2003 as Foreign Secretary, nation-state sovereignty and its retention had regained prominence.

⁵Christopher Hill "What is to be done? Foreign Policy as a site for political action" *International Affairs* 79:2 2003 pp233-255, p236.

⁶Cf. "Britain's Place in the World" *International Affairs* (Special Editions) 68:3 1992 and 68:4 1992; Ulrich Schlie "Niedergang als Chance?" *Europäische Rundschau* 31:1 2003 pp73-78.

⁷Jack Straw "Rethinking our attitudes to sovereignty" *Independent* 22 November 2001.

The Iraq crisis has shown that the foreign policies of nation states are ultimately determined by national interests. That will always be the case in a Union whether of 15 or 25 sovereign countries. For Britain, and other member states, there will also always be issues where our own pressing national interests are not shared by a critical mass of EU partners. We therefore need to be able to act on our own initiative—as Britain did in Sierra Leone, and France has done in the Ivory Coast. We may look for support and help from other EU partners, but there isn't a sufficient mass of shared interests for a truly common policy. We also have responsibilities as one of the Union's two Permanent Members of the UN Security Council and the United Nations is and will remain an association of sovereign nation states.⁸

British public opinion was roughly equivalent with many continental societies, about 60%-80% against the war and UK participation, though support for its troops rose after they were sent. Accord with other national publics in this case did not mean that the British wanted to align on other issues, like the Euro, for example.⁹ Prime Minister Blair went to war against Saddam when the British public was largely against it (and nominally aligned with France and Germany). Blair favours joining the Euro while the public remains resolutely against it (against monetary union with France and Germany). Blair conceives of the UK as a bridge between the USA and continental Europe. On Iraq he leant to the former. The opposition of a popular majority to the Iraq war did not translate into favouring closer union with the continent.

Blair remained resilient as his popularity level plummeted and sundry Labour MPs threatened rebellion. Conservative support for military intervention was accompanied by displays of contempt for the French government in the House of Commons and demands for tough, if unspecified, action against M. Chirac. As Labour dissenters cited their own moral objections, for Blair and others an alternative moral requirement to remove Saddam merged with their evaluation of British interests.

We took the decision that to leave Iraq in its brutalised state under Saddam was wrong. Now there is upon us a heavy responsibility to make the peace worth the war. We shall do

⁸Jack Straw “Europe in the world” speech at CEPS, Brussels, 19 May 2003.

⁹Roy Denman “Euro in Britain? Don’t bet on it” *International Herald Tribune* 21 May 2003 p6.

so...with a fixed and steady resolve that the cause was just, the victory right and the future for us to make in a way that will stand the judgement of history.¹⁰

The question remains why the moral imperative arose at that particular time (and the whole UK role was then further complicated by events leading to the Hutton inquiry). Blair and Straw were not alone in this view, however. Although he also provided no direct evidence of the weaponry in question, EU Commissioner Patten too had declared that:

Everyone knows that for years, Saddam Hussein has defied the authority of the UN over his manufacture, possession and use of weapons on mass destruction. In addition he has an appalling record on human rights.¹¹

France

Jacques Chirac had acquired extensive scope in the French domestic arena through his marginalisation of the left (or its implosion) and re-election in 2002. It augmented his role as statesman and capacity to exercise foreign policy as a presidential 'domaine réserve'.¹² While the central role of the President was verified during the Iraq crisis, French policy was motivated not only by preferences on Iraq directly but by a reservoir of resentment at the American 'hyperpower', present to some degree in all parties. The French course represented a post-Cold War extension of 'overcoming Yalta' and the goal of a strong Europe (steered by France), sometimes expressed as a 'multi-polar world'.¹³

Chirac exhibited some opportunism and an interest in personal prestige, international as well as national. Until their injudicious directives to Central and Eastern European EU candidates, he and his foreign policy elite practised a fairly adroit diplomacy. There was no categorical exclusion of support for the Anglo-Americans or neutrality until early 2003. By then the trend of French and other popular attitudes was established. After an anti-war/anti-USA course was decided, the strategy was to both follow and appeal to public

¹⁰Tony Blair, speech in the House of Commons, 14 April 2003.

¹¹Chris Patten, speech to the European Parliament, 29 January 2003.

¹²“Vom Schurkenpräsidenten zum Star” *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* 22 April 2003 p39; Medard Ritzenhofen “Der neue Sonnenkönig” *Rheinischer Merkur* 15, 10 April 2003 p19.

opinion and to present France as leader of the 'peace camp'. Chirac could say without much dispute that he was reflecting the *national* interest. A poll published at the beginning of April showed 78% of the French public disapproved of the 'American war' (the 30 US' allies went virtually unrecognised) and 74% approved of Chirac's opposition to Bush. 65% thought the conflict was entirely or primarily caused by the USA. During the actual fighting 34% were on the side of the US/UK, 25% on the side of Iraq and 31% neither. 61% thought France should participate militarily to maintain peace after the conflict.¹⁴

France used the UN quite effectively as a political and public relations instrument, though its attack on the, in the US administration context, relative moderate Colin Powell, was less prudent. While France tried to block Anglo-American action against Saddam Hussein its politicians have on other occasions shown little respect (and instead even derision) for UN procedures, international law or public opinion elsewhere if it was interpreted as hindering French goals. France also had hard financial interests at stake, being along with Russia, the biggest creditors to Iraq. In a political battle over oil, Elf-Aquitaine would need strong state support against Exxon, Standard Oil, BP, etc.¹⁵

The Iraq conflict also illustrated the enduring French interest in 'controlling' Germany. The circumstances enabled Chirac to re-establish, at least temporarily, the proper order of things.¹⁶ Alignment on Iraq was linked one way or another to other bilateral issues: like agreement reached on the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) in October 2002, and on EU enlargement in December 2002.¹⁷ It coincided with the 40th Anniversary of the Elysee Treaty in January 2003. If France and Germany could not present a common front in this situation, an already strained axis, in which so much had been invested, would suffer more credibility loss.¹⁸

¹³*Le Debat* 125 May-August 2003; "Der Kaiser von Europa" *Der Spiegel* 9, 24 February 2003 pp 110-112.

¹⁴"La France et la guerre en Irak" *Le Monde* 1 April 2003 p1.

¹⁵Dominik Baur "Der Kampf ums Öl beginnt" *Der Spiegel Online* 17 April 2003 www.spiegel.de

¹⁶Gerald Braunberger "Auf den Spuren de Gaulles" *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* 12 April 2003 p3.

¹⁷Ulrike Guérot "Annäherung in der Agrarpolitik: Trägt der deutsch-französische Kompromiss?" *Internationale Politik* 57:11 2002 pp53-59.

¹⁸Joachim Schild "Das Ende einer Ära? Deutsch-französische Beziehungen im 40. Jahr des Elysee-Betrages" *Gesellschaft-Wirtschaft-Politik* 51:4 2002 pp421-433.

Germany

In July-September 2002 the international manoeuvring on what to do about Saddam coincided with a national election campaign in Germany, one that the ruling SPD-Green coalition then looked like losing. Chancellor Gerhard Schröder (SPD), who had been accruing more foreign policy competences to his office, exercised what many commentators perceived was a rather clumsy 'diplomacy'. He painted himself into a political corner through early categorical statements that Germany would not participate in a war against Saddam and would oppose the USA if it did. Firstly, on the international front, no one had actually demanded from the German government that it make ground troops available or take part in any bombing operations. Secondly, in the domestic context, for nominally SPD or Green voters who opposed German participation, which parties would they have voted for otherwise, if the SPD and Greens had offered some support for military action? The customary post-war German oscillation between the USA and France began to look quite comfortable in comparison to the emerging scenario. There were other considerations for the government including the fear of Germany becoming a terrorist target. After experiences in the 1970s and the recent discovery of Al Qa'ida cells in Hamburg this anxiety had some justification. In a more cost-conscious sense, budgetary problems added to disinclinations toward military commitment.

While doing its best to indicate otherwise internally, the German government did quasi-participate in the conflict. It provided flyover rights for allied aircraft, security for US bases, stationing of Tornados in Turkey for protection of NATO allies and Israel, and wounded Americans were flown back to Germany. There were also reports of German special forces being in the general area on the eve of the war. All this was controversial domestically even as the Bush administration and others castigated Germany for not doing enough. Schröder tried to distract attention from these aspects. SPD-Green anti-war statements resonated with a pacifist electorate. With a few exceptions, like Hans-Ulrich Klose, party leaderships aimed to appease opponents of the same government's role in Kosovo 1999 when Germany was involved in a non-UN mandated NATO operation against Serbia. By a curious coincidence, in February 2003 Germany took over the presidency of the UN Security Council, the main forum for it to stress its preferences: the primacy of international law and

that the UN must have a central role in any action against or in Iraq. At the same time the hard legalistic approach was being questioned in Germany itself as too inflexible and reform-unfriendly.¹⁹ Foreign Minister Fischer tried to exploit his relatively cordial association with Powell but could not prevent German-American relations deteriorating to a post-1945 nadir. During a temporary communications freeze when, apart from Fischer and Powell, scarcely any of the respective leaderships were speaking to each other, axes were constructed resulting in a near-global arrangement of opposed groupings.

After some hesitation, the leader of the main German opposition party, Angela Merkel (CDU), took a pro-American position on Iraq.²⁰ Following the 2002 election Merkel decided she could not be more pacifist than the government and maintained this course despite polls suggesting a fall from about 40% to 20% approval. In later months her ratings improved as other issues moved back onto the political agenda. Friedbert Pflüger (CDU), one of German politics leading foreign affairs experts, supported the US/UK out of alliance loyalty and a belief that Saddam had to be deposed by force if necessary. He was also anxious to maintain a 'continuity of continuity' in German foreign policy. A position paper transmitted concerns about change and consequences.²¹ Edmund Stoiber, chief of the CDU's Bavarian 'sister party', the CSU, practiced a calculating politics. He was equivocal in the pre-war months and conveniently absent on a visit to China when a decisive statement from an alternative chancellor was required. He later opposed the April 2003 German-French-Belgian-Luxemburger summit, held to discuss Iraq and the consequences for Europe including its future military roles. Stoiber claimed 'we don't need a European army, rather national units that are linked by permanent political and military structures'.²²

The German media, meanwhile, was largely against military action. Prevalent anti-Bush sentiments sometimes became anti-American.²³ One study characterised German television as 'especially critical', compared with the BBC as 'ambivalent' (high neutrality in reporting),

¹⁹“Die verstaubte Verfassung” *Der Spiegel* 20, 12 May 2003 (title).

²⁰Susanne Höll “Der seltsame Kriegskurs der Chefin” *Süddeutsche Zeitung* 29/30 March 2003 p9.

²¹Friedbert Pflüger MdB “Gegen Saddam – an der Seite der USA: Fragen und Antworten zum militärischen Vorgehen gegen den Irak” Position Paper, Berlin, 20 March 2003.

²²“Stoiber: Auf Vierer-Gipfel verzichten” *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* 22 April 2003 p6.

²³Heribert Prantl “Recht bleibt Recht, aber nur solange es passt” *Süddeutsche Zeitung* 22/23 March 2003 p4; Christian Wernicke “Europa als Amerikas Rosinenkucken” *Süddeutsche Zeitung* 21 March 2003.

and the ABC as 'patriotic'.²⁴ Iraq showed that German foreign affairs are becoming more internally disputed. Much depends however on whether a party is in government or opposition; one might do in the former what it rejects as the latter. The political elite in general favours establishing the post of European Foreign Minister and, until later in 2003, Joschka Fischer was being touted as a candidate. A preference for more QMV in foreign and security policy may have overlooked the possibility that a future EU-determined course may collide with attitudes in the German polity. For example, the emergence of a conflict for which a majority of EU states vote to respond militarily when Germany's domestic political environment indicates otherwise. It is not clear what a German government would do then. Divergence from its other principal foreign policy bearing, concord with the USA, supported the view that 'the foreign policy identity of Germany is presently going through a profound process of change'.²⁵ The statement of independence *vis-à-vis* the USA may have led to less not more freedom of action. For some observers, Schröder became an 'accessory' (*Anhängsel*) of Chirac²⁶ and German representatives had no real influence on proceedings other than antagonising the Americans. German-French relations have been cooling in recent years and prominent figures like former Chancellor Helmut Schmidt urge that there can be no permanent rift. Iraq precipitated an at least temporary and partial restoration of roles in a new context.²⁷

Although its present government opposed a military role in Iraq, Germany now has the second most troops (over 10,000) stationed around the world. It maintains a role in several peace-keeping missions. If the war against Saddam had occurred a year earlier or later and not coincided with a national election, the Iraq scenario may well have been different.

Poland

More than Britain and France, though like Germany, if for inverse reasons, Polish foreign policy is guided by powerful historical motivations. 'You have to understand our history' is a

²⁴"Im Krieg findet jeder zu seiner eigenen Wahrheit" *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* 14 April 2003.

²⁵Gunter Hellmann "Sag beim Abschied leise Servus!: Die Zivilmacht Deutschland beginnt, ein neues "Selbst" zu behaupten" *Politische Vierteljahresheft* 43:3 2002 pp498-507.

²⁶"Gerhard Schröder als Anhängsel Chiracs" *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* 26 February 2003 p3.

²⁷Eckart Lohse "So eng wie lange nicht" *Franfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* 12 April 2003 p3.

phrase emphasised by foreign affairs professionals.²⁸ Most especially they mean the 20th century: a Nazi-Soviet pact, invasion, occupation, the loss of 1/6th of the pre-war Polish population, then forty five years of Soviet hegemony. In this time most Poles perceived their hope for freedom as the USA and that it (and Poles themselves) enabled this. Poland is then an 'America friendly' country and loyalty to the USA is a signature of its international outlook.²⁹ An American diplomat noted that of two very pro-American countries in the world the United States was second. It is not entirely a cliché that Poland would be the 51st state of USA if it could.³⁰ Poland had been representing US' diplomatic interests as its proxy in Iraq since 1991 and provided some personnel in the first Gulf War. Although the Polish government tried to underplay its involvement in the second one, smaller protests than in other European countries did not mean an absence of controversy. The government did not admit sending 54 soldiers from Poland's elite military unit Grom until pictures of them, including some poses with an American flag, were published.³¹ At a televised press conference/military briefing a Polish reporter noted a lack of informing the public.

This participation has nonetheless contributed to a spectacular rise in political, military and strategic importance: from Soviet client state in the Warsaw Pact to commanding a 'protection zone' in Iraq, even if this brings its own dangers and disadvantages. Poland is proud to be in a 'new league'; the British 'trojan horse' in the EU is about to be joined by the (falsely underrated) Polish 'trojan donkey'.³² Poland's emergence in international affairs is achieved more through its relationship to the USA than to the EU. Poland bought American fighter jets (48 Lockheed Martin worth \$3.5 billion) and will receive loans or 'investments' to help pay for them (\$7.5 billion). That Poland did not buy from a EU country added to the friction. US Secretary of Defence, Donald Rumsfeld, also suggested that American bases might be shifted from Germany to Poland, which triggered a rush of excitement among prospective host cities.³³

²⁸Interviews with the author, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Warsaw, September 2001 and April 2003.

²⁹"Polen ist altes Europa" *Der Spiegel* 18, 28 April 2003; "Triumph der Treue" *Der Spiegel* 20, 12 May 2003.

³⁰Interviews with the author, US Embassy, Prague, July 2002; Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Warsaw, September 2001.

³¹"Poland, Hungary & Czech Republic versus War in Iraq" <http://www.bellaonline.com/articles/art9173.asp>; "Kontrowersyjna fotografia" *Polska Zbrojna* n13 (323) 30 March 2003 p16.

³²"Triumph der Treue"

³³"Polen: Bürgermeister werben um US Truppen-Standorte" *Der Spiegel* 12, 17 March 2003.

Polish diplomacy aimed to find a solution for Iraq that did not conflict with its pro-US tendencies. In October 2002 Polish Foreign Minister Cimoszewicz spoke of 'sharing the American assessment'. In a later 'non-paper' he wrote that the 'world is changing at a faster pace than the UN', of 'fundamental values shared by the international community', and proposed a 'Group of Sages'.³⁴ Another 'non-decision' was to actually declare war (which no warring party did). Although the legal grounds for Poland's involvement in the operation had been examined and found to be sufficient, the chief of Poland's National Security Bureau declared that "state of war' is a legal term and Poland has not reached such a state'.³⁵ The Polish public were sceptical about war but not through anti-American motivations. There were some protests outside the US embassy and a general disquiet, though some of those protesting had also done so against Poland joining the EU and against globalisation, market capitalism, and so on. In one poll 52% said that Poland should back the USA (not the same as favouring war). Other sources suggested over 50% were against it.³⁶ Potential support for the Franco-German position was weakened by French comments that Poland and other EU candidates had 'missed a chance to keep quiet'.³⁷ Former Foreign Minister, and Francophile, Bronislaw Geremek, said Chirac's words were a 'prelude to how this great European state, France, imagines the coexistence of the weaker and the stronger. Poland will never accept—this must be clearly said—any kind of policy of hegemony.'

The Polish complex toward France is that on every similar occasion, Polish observers...ask themselves a question that has been traditional for 200 years: what place does Poland occupy in Paris's global policy? The answer, it seems, is simple—not a very important one.³⁸

Russia being part of the Franco-German group was also a discouragement. There was some irony, however, about Polish disappointment at Germany's refusal to participate militarily. A

³⁴"A New Political Act for the United Nations" Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Warsaw, 21 December 2002.

³⁵Malgorzata Kaczorowska "On the Front Line" *Warsaw Voice* 30 March 2003 p5.

³⁶Jan Repa "'New Europe's' US Leanings" BBC News 19 February 2003 <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/2781521.stm>

³⁷"What Gaul" and "Primum non Nocere" *Warsaw Voice* 2 March 2003 pp5-6; Tim Luckhurst "Poles apart?" *The Spectator* 1 March 2003.

³⁸Jan Maj "For sale: Peugeot 406—Cheap" *Warsaw Voice* 2 March 2003 p24.

minor fracas involving another former foreign minister, Wladysaw Bartoszewski, ensued when the Germans rejected an offer of a role in the Polish-led protection zone.³⁹

The EU and the Common Foreign and Security Policy

The continuing challenge for the EU is to harmonise unity and diversity in the same place and time. Many have argued that diversity or difference is its strength.⁴⁰ Can that be applied to foreign and security affairs? It would be preferable to prevent crises from happening; as that has not had complete success and is not likely to, tests like Iraq give some indication of how much unity Europe possesses and how 'common' the CFSP is. That is, during a political and/or military conflict, not matters of administration, distribution or constructing 'institutional forums'. Crowe has noted a 'precedent for member states to suppress their own views to arrive at a common view: in other words for members states to accept that having a common policy is the highest priority',⁴¹ whether in the Iraq case that meant all being with or all against the USA position. Several analysts have, however, detected a renationalising in recent years. In an article titled 'In foreign policy why doesn't Europe speak with one voice?' Johannes Varwick wrote that 'in extreme cases,'

even for traditionally integration-ready states like Germany, national autonomy obviously comes before European unity. States like Great Britain or France are only European if the situation is in accord with their national interests; in emergencies they do what the USA is always accused of: unilateral action without much concern for partners.⁴²

A designated component of 'flexibility' in foreign, security and defence policy might be useful, both rhetorically and practically, but it dilutes the simultaneously desired and oft-stated 'commonality/solidarity'. In October 2002, Solana's office (High Representative for CFSP) had suggested key points for a more efficient EU foreign and security policy. Firstly,

³⁹“Triumph der Treue”

⁴⁰Christine Langfried *Das politische Europa: Differenz als Potential der Europäischen Union* (Baden-Baden: Nomos 2002).

⁴¹Crowe “A Common European Foreign Policy after Iraq?” p536.

⁴²Johannes Varwick “Warum Spricht Europa außenpolitisch nicht mit einer Stimme?” *Gesellschaft-Wirtschaft-Politik* 51:4 2002 pp401-407.

'external representation should be delegated by the Council to the High Representative, where appropriate in collaboration with the Commissioner responsible for RELEX'. Secondly, the High Representative 'should be empowered to present proposals in his own right'. This would 'encompass the possibility and capability to mobilise the whole spectrum of instruments at the disposal of the Community and of the Member States – including military assets. There is an argument to be made for greater use of joint proposals of the High Representative and the Commission.' Thirdly, 'a permanent Chair for the External Relations Council is necessary'. Fourthly, 'Unanimity at 25 (or more) on each and every CFSP issue will make decision-making very difficult. The EU needs to seriously reflect on the possibility of enlarging the existing possibilities for majority voting while taking full account of the interests and specific situations of Member States.' Fifthly, a 'pragmatic pooling' of diplomatic resources is required. This 'offers the potential to develop a "European Foreign Ministry" at a pace and in a manner that the Member States feel comfortable with.'⁴³

There have been indications of gradual convergence between the External Affairs Directorate and the CFSP secretariat. This points in the direction of a European Foreign Ministry. Suggested aspirants to leadership of this speculative office included Joschka Fischer,⁴⁴ or perhaps Chris Patten. This official would presumably be the political chief of the Rapid Reaction Force, the Eurocorps, and perhaps EU representation in the UN. But are the member states willing to truly empower a highest authority in all areas and instances of foreign, security and defence policy? Shortly before the Iraq imbroglio Ernst-Otto Czempiel wrote that 'It will be years before the European Union can function as a unified actor in world politics. For the development of a new and pertinent foreign and security policy it requires *only the will*'.⁴⁵ It is a misconception that an official-legal EU position was against military intervention in Iraq: French, German, and Belgian political positions were against it. An EU demarche stated:

⁴³See http://www.europa.eu.int/pol/cfsp/index_en.htm

⁴⁴"Deutschland beansprucht herausragendes Amt in der EU" and "Lob für Fischer, Anspruch für Deutschland" *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* 13 May 2003 p1 and p3.

⁴⁵Ernst-Otto Czempiel "Europe's Mission: Pushing for a Participative World Order" *Internationale Politik und Gesellschaft* 1 2003 pp25-42, p33. Emphasis added.

The European Union is deeply concerned about the Iraqi crisis. Time is running out. UNSCR 1441 gave Iraq a final opportunity to disarm peacefully. If it does not take this chance it will carry the responsibility for all the consequences.⁴⁶

This was confirmed by the conclusions of the European Council on 17 February when it was again declared that the 'Iraqi regime alone will be responsible for the consequences' if a peaceful solution could not be found.⁴⁷ That is different to how the French and German governments were interpreting the situation. As the war in Iraq was underway, the EU took over the military command of the mission "Allied Harmony" in Macedonia from NATO.⁴⁸ This showed it has the technical capacity and in this case political agreement to carry out peacekeeping tasks. But peacemaking, or before that, war-preventing? There are still more questions than answers. According to Helmut Schmidt, 'the Iraq war and the very controversial positions, in London, Rome and Madrid on one side, and on the other in Paris and Berlin, have unmasked ten years of talking about an alleged communal foreign and security policy as a years-long babble without real content'.

Worse still: if the governments do not consciously restrain themselves then American power claims and the contradictory positions of European governments and media could lead to grave interruption and even to the ending of the European integration process. No European government can close its eyes to such a possibility. It is therefore time that we Europeans warn our governments to apply the cardinal virtue of moderation and the democratic virtue of compromise.⁴⁹

While noting European integration as 'spectacularly successful', and citing the current enlargement to support it, Patten had a similar view to Schmidt:

⁴⁶“Demarche by the Presidency on behalf of the EU regarding Iraq” Brussels, 4 February 2003 (5963/03 Presse 28).

⁴⁷“Conclusions of the European Council” Extraordinary Meeting, 17 February 2003.

⁴⁸“Die EU übernimmt militärische Mission in Mazedonien” *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* 1 April 2003 p6; Christoph Schwegmann *Kann die EU die NATO auf dem Balkan ersetzen?* SWP-Studie S43 (Berlin: Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik 2002).

⁴⁹Helmut Schmidt “Laudatio auf Roman Herzog”, Munich, 29 March 2003 in *Franz-Josef Strauß Preis 2003* (Hanns-Seidel-Stiftung: München 2003) pp62-63.

The war in Iraq has undeniably been a setback in our attempts to create a common European foreign policy...Member states have been and continue to be all over the place on Iraq, even if there is more common ground at the level of public opinion. The usual attempts to paper over differences through insipid declarations have fooled no-one. The immature and vulnerable side of European togetherness has been starkly revealed.⁵⁰

Conclusion

A motivating characteristic and function of European integration was the attempt to move balance of power politics from inside to outside Europe. Beyond that the aim was to eliminate such politics altogether and to act as a civilising influence. The EU is 'different', often posited as a 'civilian power': a non-military entity with humanitarian, social, and democratisation goals, as well as other economic and security considerations of its own.⁵¹ However, Europe exists in a wider world of, often unforeseen, crises and dangers. 'New conceptual categories' in which to site it, alternative theoretical or epistemological prisms through which to view, or normative claims about its proper objectives and means to achieving them cannot hermetically seal it off from unpleasant things. Moreover, some parts of the EU, France and the UK, are not situated within the rubric 'civilian powers'. This is normally ascribed to Germany and, less directly, to smaller EU members like Luxembourg, Belgium, the Netherlands and the Scandinavian states. This does not mean that France and the UK have no civilian qualities. Indeed their reach in terms of civil and cultural influence is greater than Germany or the smaller EU states. The United States is also a civilian power, concurrent to being a military superpower. It has not yet been demonstrated that a state, a group of states, or networks of institutions and states, can be effective civilian powers, or would even try to be, without simultaneously having sufficient military-security capacity of their own or having it provided for them: 'a residual instrument serving essentially to safeguard other means of international interaction'.⁵²

⁵⁰Patten "Keynote Address on European Union Foreign Policy" p2.

⁵¹Richard Whitman "The Fall, and Rise, of Civilian Power Europe?" National Europe Centre Paper No.16 (Canberra: NEC 2002).

⁵²Hanns W. Maull "Germany and Japan: The new Civilian Powers" *Foreign Affairs* 69:5 1990 pp91-106 cited in Whitman "The Fall, and Rise, of Civilian Power Europe?".

Robert Kagan's dichotomy of the USA as power-friendly and 'Europe' as afraid of or rejecting of power⁵³ underestimates national differences among current and future EU members, and that the politics between them over Iraq had links to other issues. Whatever their relative merits, the "Letter of Eight" of 29 January 2003 and other variable positions made the EU look more like a 'congeries of distinctive states without collective will' than a cohesive *Union*.⁵⁴ Demands for 'emancipation' from the USA, or attempts to exploit it as a new 'negative integration factor', are confronted by proponents of America, with, as they see it, vital interests in 'staying close to number one'.⁵⁵ Others argue 'Europe' should not try to match the US militarily, or have an army. Rather it should concentrate its resources and strategies on 'the cultivation of civilian and quasi-military power'.⁵⁶ To emancipate itself from security dependence, 'pacifist Europe' needs a sufficiently powerful, deployable military capacity, backed by the necessary political will to operationalise it when 'European' interests—material or moral—are threatened. Are the publics of EU member states so pacifist that they are against any national or European military identity/capacity/activity? Do they want a common European defence force, also capable of force projection; that is, one independent of the US? Months after a British statement that 'there will be no standing "European Army" and the commitment of national forces to an EU operation remains a sovereign decision for nations concerned'⁵⁷ there was an apparent *rapprochement* on military questions between Blair, Chirac and Schröder. The suggestion of more common ground would also weaken the argument of a civilian power EU.

A combination of 'realist' and 'domestic politics' approaches provides a more plausible explanation of the global and European politics surrounding the Iraq crisis than the force of supra-national institutions and 'norms'. State actors instrumentalised the UN and EU for their own purposes. Informal transnational groups notwithstanding, Europe appeared a constellation of national spheres with political conflict characterised by discord between national publics and their governments, and dispute or alliance among states.

⁵³Kagan *Of Paradise and Power: America and Europe in the New World Order* (New York: Knopf 2003).

⁵⁴Stanley Hoffmann "France: Keeping the Demons at Bay" *New York Review of Books* 3 March 1994 pp10-16; Barnaby Mason "Analysis: Europe's Divisions laid bare" BBC News, 30 January 2003.

⁵⁵Christoph Bertram "Europe's best interest: Staying close to Number One" *Internationale Politik und Gesellschaft* 1 2003 pp61-70.

⁵⁶Andrew Moravcsik "How Europe can win without an army" *Financial Times* 2 April 2003; Czempiel "Europe's Mission".

⁵⁷See www.fco.gov.uk