

The World after the Iraqi War

How to overcome the Crisis – The Road towards a” New Atlantic Alliance

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Contents

- **The Crisis in Iraq – Implications for the Near and Middle East**
- **The New Geo-Strategic Situation in the Near and Middle East**
- **The Iraq Policy of the USA and Great Britain under pressure (in Disarray)**
- **Durable Peace in the Near and Middle East – through democratic transformation or on the Basis of the Current US military Dominance in the Region**
- **The Road towards Peace in the Near and Middle East – the Creation of a New Atlantic Alliance**

Main Conclusions

The essay comes to the conclusion that the strategy of “uni-lateralism” and of preventive or pre-emptive war as applied in the Iraqi crisis – has failed to accomplish its major political objectives – apart from the removal of Saddam Hussein from his office - but remaining free and alive.

This unfortunate situation was caused partially by the contradictions of the war objectives and partially by misjudging the situation in Iraq after military victory as well as by the absence of a decision of the UN Security Council authorising the use of military force. In addition, the split of positions among the member states of the North Atlantic Alliance contributed to the political disaster.

The essay comes to the conclusion that the confrontation between the “Coalition of the Willing” and the “Coalition of the Unwilling” has undermined the position of the West as a whole, and thus also the prospects for peace in the Near and Middle East. Consequently, the differences, which emerged in the context of the Iraqi war, need to be overcome and settled – at least for the future when facing international crisis threatening peace or regional stability.

To meet the challenges of international crises, the North Atlantic Alliance should assume - next to the United Nations - the role of the central organ for policy consultations, as the central military coordination centre and operational headquarter; it would have to include the Russian Federation and other associated countries.

At present, it is hard to trace serious intentions or indications of political farsightedness, not to speak of political determination in the centres of political power of NATO-countries for such initiatives and their acceptance in the countries concerned. The rift among Western countries

makes it all the more difficult to engage the Russian Federation in this endeavour, not to speak of China, for instance in the case of the North Korean Crisis.

The Alliance should charge a group of “wise men (or women for that matter)” to review the situation and to present recommendations for the shaping of a North Atlantic Alliance capable to meet the international security issues of this century. Such a procedure was applied successfully in the past. The “Council of Three Wise Men” – established after the debacle of the Suez Canal Crisis in 1956 and the Harmel report submitted in 1967 with the goal of harmonizing defence and detente efforts within the Alliance at the time helped substantially to overcome conflicting trends within the alliance and helped to re-establish the credibility and cohesiveness needed for meeting the challenges of the Cold War at the time.

A convincing manifestation of the political determination for the re-vitalization of an Alliance of partners - adjusted to the challenges of international security in the 21st century – could lead to an early engagement of the North Atlantic Alliance in the management of the crises in the Near and Middle East.

The Crisis in Iraq – Implications for the Near and Middle East

On May 1, 2003, President George W. Bush declared the end of the Iraqi War and Saddam Hussein deposed from power. With a great deal of confidence the President looked at the forthcoming reconstruction of Iraq to be financed by the oil that would start flowing shortly and towards the development of a democratic political structure in the country. Military forces of the USA and of the coalition partners would deal with the remaining security issues and pockets of resistance.

Among the coalition partners of the USA, there were not only the traditional strategic allies of the USA – such as Great Britain and Australia – but up to a degree also Denmark, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain and in particular some of the new members of the Alliance from Eastern Europe and such countries that plan to join the Alliance and the European Union in the near future, institutions that were deeply split on the Iraqi issue. US Minister of Defence Ronald Rumsfeld divided the European Union into the “Old” and the “New” Europe and criticised heavily the “old” EU member states that opposed the US course of action against Iraq. The USA demonstrated their readiness to split Europe, if necessary. However, public opinion in all European countries was highly critical of the US intervention in Iraq and shared the sceptical attitude adopted notably by France, Germany and Russia. There was no majority within the Security Council in favour of the US- and Great Britain sponsored draft resolution to legitimise the military intervention – neither a qualified majority comprising all veto powers, nor a quantitative majority of nine votes – irrespective of the position adopted by veto powers. A decision was not taken; the military intervention was initiated without a UN mandate. In November 2002, the UN Security Council had been in a position – after intensive consultations in particular between the USA and France – to adopt unanimously Resolution No 1441, a resolution that demanded from Iraq by way of an ultimatum the fulfilment of its disarmament obligations regarding weapons of mass destruction and imposed once again the dispatch of UN weapon inspectors. Also, the first Gulf war – in 1991 after the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait – had been sanctioned by the United Nations.

Irrespective of the fact that the UN weapon inspectors – until March 2003 - could not find evidence of weapons of mass destruction or preparatory measures on the Iraqi side in this regard (nuclear, chemical and biological weapons) US President George W. Bush and British

Prime Minister Tony Blair maintained their position that Iraq constituted an immediate threat to the USA in particular and to the West in general and that - for that reason - a military intervention was called for. Until the tragic events of September 11, 2001, "hardliners" in Washington had failed to win over President Bush to undertake a finishing blow against Iraqi President Saddam Hussein that had not been undertaken by his father during the first Gulf war in early 1991, after Kuwait had been liberated from the Iraqi occupation of the country.

The President managed to secure support in his country and world wide not only for a military campaign against the Taliban-regime in Afghanistan that had provided operational freedom of action to the Al Qaeda terror-network, he could also – at least in the eyes of the US Administration - include Saddam Hussein, even integrate Saddam Hussein into the hostile perception of a fundamentalist Islamic terrorist movement and thus portray Iraq as a genuine target of a military pre-emptive strike. However, the attempt failed to convince the international community of the necessity for an alliance that would bring about the removal from power of Saddam Hussein because of his alleged program for weapons of mass destruction and because of his alleged linkages with the Al Qaeda Network. The possession of weapons of mass destruction or the preparation of production of such weapons and thus the violation of international obligations accepted by Iraq after the Gulf War in 1991 and in connection with existing international disarmament- and arms control agreements served as a, as the major justification for the military intervention. However, the UN weapon inspectors failed to provide evidence for the possession of such weapons or the preparation of the production of such weapons. In addition, the attempt failed to provide evidence for the existence of linkages between the Saddam Hussein Regime and the Al Qaeda network. In the end, the political goal to bring about a change of regime in Iraq – because of its suppressive action against the population and the minorities and its undemocratic nature - was made the principal justification for the war. President Bush could not revoke the massive build-up of forces during the winter months of 2002/2003 without tremendous loss of face unless Saddam Hussein withdrew from the political stage on his own. Bush faced the pressure for military action - a situation that he had brought about by way of his own decisions.

However, if regime change served as the principal justification for the military intervention, other countries in the region will ask themselves whether they would be the next target of a military intervention by the USA and its partners, because none of the Islamic regimes in the region can be considered a democratic country according to Western standards. Also, the courts are not independent, and the media are independent up to a degree only.

It may be that in the event of the emergence of democratically legitimised governments and of pluralistic open societies – it could be easier to bring about a durable peace between Israel and Palestine than under present circumstances with autocratic Islamic regimes in power all over the place. Indeed, a number of US analysts demand to apply in the Near and Middle East the democratisation policies adopted after World War II in Germany and in Japan. Such a comparison ignores the fundamental differences that existed internationally at the time. The US entered Europe and the Far East as liberators of the countries from German or Japanese occupation. The USA entered Germany and Japan – together with the Soviet Union – as victorious power. Under the impact of the emerging Cold War it was in the interest of the West to bring about an early rapprochement between the Western countries and Germany and Japan so that the democratic structures that had been destroyed in Germany by the NS regime could recover quickly after World War II – as well as a swift re-integration of Germany into the structures of the Western communities. On the other hand the responsibility for the outbreak of World War II was clearly with Japan and Germany. Today's position of the USA in the Near and Middle cannot be compared with the prestige and the merits of the US as the liberator of Europe and Asia from occupying dictatorships.

The new Geo-Strategic Situation in the Near and Middle East

As a result of the second Gulf war, which was in fact a genuine Iraq War, the geo-strategic situation has undergone substantial changes in the Near and Middle East. The USA established themselves as the dominant military power in the region. On this basis, which has to be considered a rather permanent one in nature, the USA will try to implement the road map to peace between Israel and Palestine and an independent Palestinian State, a plan worked out by the USA, the United Nations, the European Union and the Russian Federation. George W. Bush, who had expressed doubts about the mediation efforts of his predecessor in office, Bill Clinton, considered it now timely – against the background of a re-enforced position of the US in the region to meet in person the then newly appointed Palestinian Prime Minister Abbas and the Israelian Prime Minister Sharon in order to bring about direct talks between the two sides. The withdrawal from occupied territories as well as the discontinuation of the establishment of new settlements on the part of Israel, and the discontinuation of terrorist attacks on the part of the Palestinians were considered to be first important steps in the peace process according to the established road map.

Some terrorist groups interrupted their lethal suicide attacks. However the newly appointed Prime Minister Abbas resigned after realising that he could not reduce Arafat's political weight. Since then, the third Prime Minister in succession – Qurei – promised to undertake another attempt to prevent further terrorist acts on the part of Palestinian organisations. However, without ongoing efforts by the Palestinian President Arafat himself it is doubtful whether a genuine peace process will ever take off.

Therefore the question remains whether both sides are in a position, even if they wanted, to bring about conditions favourable for meaningful negotiations. It is also doubtful whether under the prevailing conditions of insecurity in Iraq the newly acquired military weight of the USA in the Near and Middle East will be sufficient to encourage negotiations between Israel and Palestine, to discourage nuclear ambitions of other states in the region and the recruitment and deployment of new terrorists, fighters and militant groups. Iran and Syria are looked at with suspicion. The domestic situation in Saudi Arabia is versatile. In order not to expose the Saudi Royal family unnecessarily, the USA redeployed their forces from Saudi Arabia to other parts in the region (Katar). However, there are voices in the USA who also urge democratic reforms in Saudi Arabia.

The Policy of the USA and of Great Britain in Iraq in Disarray

A few weeks after the official US statement about the end of the war in Iraq and of the Saddam Hussein regime the security situation has undergone a major change in the sense of deterioration. The same has to be said about the development of public opinion in the USA with regard to the Bush policy in the Near and Middle East.

In Iraq, troops loyal to the former president Saddam Hussein, possibly also Al Qaeda fighters conduct a more or less structured partisan war in the country against the armed forces of the coalition and against the offices of International Organisations as well as Embassies and forces from third countries (United Nations, International Red Cross, Italy, Korea)). On July 10, 2003, President Bush had to recognize that the security situation for the US forces could not be considered satisfactory. The US Minister of Defence mentioned the possibility of reinforcing US forces in Iraq.

The fall of Saddam Hussein was welcomed by large parts of the population in Iraq. However, the military presence of the US in Iraq is resented as well and people want to see self-government enacted in the country as soon as possible - as well as the withdrawal of the occupation army. The ongoing military operations against insurgents and terrorists hamper directly and indirectly the endeavours of the US-Administrator Bremer to advance the transfer of power to Iraqi authorities. In the presence of representatives of the United Nations the US and British Administrators established on July 12, 2003 the Transitional Governing Council – with 25 members and limited executive responsibilities. Within a year a constitution is to be worked out and general elections to be conducted. The USA maintains veto-power with regard to decisions taken by the Transitional Governing Council. The provisional government has to seek support and trust from the major three segments of the population of the country – the Kurds in the North, the Sunnites in the centre and the Shiites in the South. The Governing Council will also seek an early agreement on the withdrawal of the US and other foreign forces in the country. Parts of the political elites of the country hesitate to cooperate with the USA and with the provisional government – as long as there are still forces in the country that are loyal to Saddam Hussein and operate against foreign forces in the country and against Iraqis cooperating with the occupation forces. Also the fact that Saddam Hussein himself appears to be alive continues to hamper, of course, the political re-construction of the country. The political transformation process is slowed down, it cannot gain momentum – for how long is hard to predict. Also, the political orientation of the Shiites – and that is about 70 percent of the whole population – is subject to speculation and difficult to predict. Among them the US occupation of the country is particularly unpopular - to say the least. Apparently cooperation between Kurds and US forces functions rather well. However, Turkey is concerned about the possibility of a Kurdish autonomous state within the boundaries of Iraq or even an independent Kurdish statehood. Among not only a few Iraqis notably the families who fell victim of Saddam's suppressive acts and breaches of human rights and among the Kurdish population the US led occupation of the country is seen, of course, as liberation from a dictatorship. The majority of the population, notably the Shiites consider the US forces the symbols of the occupation.

The financial burdens for the USA to cover the expenditures for the occupation and the administration of the country are enormous. They increased from 2 billion US\$ a month to four billion US\$ monthly.

On July 11, 2003, the US Senate requested unanimously the President to engage actively the United Nations and NATO in the management of the political, economic and social problems. This demand may be seen in the first instance as an attempt to redistribute the financial burdens of the operation, however this decision of the US Senate has to be seen also as an expression of the critical attitude shared by so many parliamentarians towards the unilateral approach of the current US Administration – in cooperation with some countries – the “Coalition of the Willing”. The US-Administration rejected until now the notion of putting the operation under UN- or NATO-auspices or command. The current US policy of unilateral actions and in case of need also of pre-emptive or preventive strikes against countries hiding terrorists or preparing the production and deployment of ABC weapons is characterised by friends and foes of the USA as “imperial policy” that came about as a consequence of the predominant position of the USA as the only one surviving World Power, supported by their armament and innovative economic and armament industry. There is no lack of evidence of imperial behaviour of the USA in the past – let it be in South and Central America as well as in some parts of Asia. Europeans should see this imperial behaviour as the reverse side of the medal on which we read the logo of the Monroe-doctrine of 1823 regarding non-intervention in South- and Central American affairs. The notion of a political and military alliance – in

peacetime – including security guarantees for the partner countries as established by the Washington Treaty of 1949 on the North Atlantic Alliance constituted indeed the great exception to the rule, an exception however that bear fruit in so many ways during the more than 50 years of its existence. It initiated a development, which – together with other treaty-based involvements of the USA in the Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the World Trade Organisation (WTO), Disarmament and Arm Control Agreements, NATO, OSCE – laid the foundation for an extraordinary degree of acceptance, prestige and admiration all over the world for the USA. That world wide prestige declined drastically during recent months.

Within the USA there is no lack of manifestations of pride for their country among the elites of the political, the economic, the academic and bourgeois population, including some of the sections of the population in general critical of nationalism and US-centrism. There are many who consider the 21st century to witness the crowning of the American way of life within the US and around the world. To these observers the development of the European Union appears to be the development of a dwarf incapable of generating cohesive political and military leadership in spite of its enormous highly educated human resources and technical as well as cultural accomplishments. On top of it, the European Union ignores the challenges the world poses to the West, because it is preoccupied with the integration of new members and the deepening of the European integration and the streamlining of the European organizational structures.

On both sides of the Atlantic there are different agendas so far as the urgency or priority of the problems are concerned that need to be solved. The USA seeks to reduce international legal obligations of the USA and to enhance operational freedom for the almighty USA potential - in all spheres of life. Therefore there are fundamental differences between the two sides of the Atlantic about the International Penal Court, the Kyoto Protocol on Environment, the usefulness of the comprehensive test ban treaty. Others, however consider that the intention of the USA to extend their unilateral military engagements around the world to exceed by far their means and possibilities. Of course, they also question the validity of such strategies and their feasibility.

Nevertheless, also within the USA the number of voices are rising who do question the legitimacy and expedience of the Iraqi intervention – useful and desirable as the fall of Saddam Hussein may have been – but he is still alive. Even this limited goal was not achieved. He was only separated from the potential of the country but continues to exert influence in Iraq and may be in the Islamic and Arabic world. It is no surprise that the support for the Bush policy on Iraq is declining among the population – according to opinion polls taken in the fall of 2003. Critical questions are on the rise – in numbers and in perseverance.

The results of the weapon inspectors reports in early 2003 are confirmed by the tentative conclusions, which US inspectors stated after the occupation of the country. There were apparently in early 2003 in Iraq no nuclear weapons or for that matter chemical weapons, no biological weapons and productions sites in these fields, except for some laboratories in the biological weapons spectrum and some parts needed in any nuclear weapon program. Untenable was and is the position taken by British Prime Minister Tony Blair who stated in Parliament that Iraq could launch ABC weapon attacks on Britain within 48 minutes.

The political pressure or at least expectation should not be underrated to which intelligence organisations in the USA and in Great Britain were exposed to establish evidence for something that could confirm the long held suspicion and views of the governments concerning the Iraqi ABC-weapon programmes and potentials.

The credibility of President George W. Bush and Prime Minister Tony Blair has suffered considerable setbacks on the national and on the international stage. This could turn out to be disadvantageous in case of new crises with a more substantiated threat element than actually did exist in Iraq but was portrayed as real by the governments concerned. The rejection of the new US military doctrine – uni-lateralism and readiness for pre-emptive and preventive strikes for instance in case of an ABC threat potential in the hands of fundamentalists within state or outside state structures - suffered an enormous setback, because in the case of its first application it was based on false information, on manipulated information. Today the US President and the British Prime Minister argue in support of unilateral, pre-emptive or preventive military action – in case of need also without a UN Security Council resolution on the grounds that in the event of the existence of suppressive regimes or of “failed states” there is a legitimate cause for intervening.

Durable Peace in the Near and Middle East – by way of Democratic Transformation in the States of the Near and Middle East or on the Basis of the current US Military Dominance in the Region

Is it feasible that - under the impact of the current US Military Strategy and with the support of a few “willing” countries- the geo-strategic landscape of the Near and Middle East could be changed in such a way that democratic societies would emerge in Islamic states as a result of domestic political changes, upheavals if not otherwise, and that a peace could be established between Israel and Palestine – internationally guaranteed? Do the United States enjoy at present among Islamic Arab states – their leadership as well as the population - such a trust that they would be accepted as advisors representing a shining model? This is rather unlikely to be the case presently and for quite some time.

Or, could the newly established dominant military position of the United States in this region, which embraces complex historical, cultural and political structures as well as rivalling religious forces, lead to the imposition of peace on Israel and Palestine?

How long will the US forces stay in Iraq as an occupation force? How long will such forces be required in order to cope with the current guerrilla warfare situation? Will the US public tolerate and support such a massive military engagement in the Near and Middle East? Is it feasible and realistic to plan for a “Friendship and Mutual Assistance Treaty” between a sovereign and independent, possibly democratically organized Iraqi government and the USA as well as the United Kingdom? Such a treaty could envisage the deployment of friendly US- and UK-forces for quite some time.

Each of these perspectives is met with scepticism. Friendly relations and a close cooperation in the area of international security are rather unlikely to emerge easily from the present critical situation.

Possibly a treaty could be concluded for Israel and Palestine - as part of a peace settlement - guaranteeing the boundaries between Israel and Palestine. One condition that would have to be met appears to be an internationally supervised destruction of Israel’s nuclear potential.

Should, however, Iraq remain a bleeding wound for the United States for quite some time – more so than already Afghanistan – it is difficult to imagine, how a democratisation processes could be imposed in Iraq or be implemented on a friendly basis. Also the acceptance of or acquiescence with the US military dominance in the region can hardly be expected. The US

presence will probably lead – on a continued basis – to acts of violence and reprisals – dark clouds for the Road Map to Peace in the Near and Middle East as suggested by the USA, the European Union, the UN and the Russian Federation.

Roads to overcome the Impact and Confrontation in the Near and Middle East – the formation of a “New North Atlantic Alliance”

Time and again the question is posed and still waits for a convincing answer: What went wrong in the chanceries of countries in the West and in Institutions that are guided more or less by the Western Community of nations? Because of deficiencies in this regard, the world is faced with the gigantic task to restore a credible and feasible international security policy, to harmonise Western strategies, capabilities and interests. This task can hardly be accomplished by way of a quick fix.

Here are some samples of decisions with fatal consequences:

- The USA acknowledged the decision by the NATO-Council to invoke Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty after the events of September 2001, that means the Alliance considered the terrorists attack on the World Trade Towers in New York and on the US State Institutions in Washington to be an attack on the USA und thus on the Alliance. The United States could expect support from the partners within the Alliance to cope with the aggression from an unknown source. However, the United States - although accepting the decision by the NATO Council - did not ask for advise and support beyond the use of some NATO AWACS to protect the US airspace – for a while?
- For the battle against international terrorism the USA decided to use US military and intelligence capacities only and that one of bilaterally chosen partners, in order to shape an ad hoc coalition against terrorism led by the US. The support by others was welcome but it was not the assistance of equals - organized within an alliance - but a support rendered to a US led campaign. Also, the US accepted the support of the UN in an auxiliary way, which was reflected in UN resolutions and led to the convening of the Petersberg-conference in Germany under the chairmanship of the United Nations. This conference authorized the establishment of a UN managed ”Protection Force for Afghanistan”. It could operate only in Kabul to protect the provisional government under President Karzai in Kabul. After two years there were two important changes: the establishment of a NATO-Command Headquarter in Kabul and the establishment of a German base in northern Afghanistan (Kanduz). However, the authority of the Afghan government is not really accepted all over the country, and that could turn out to be fatal for the region, and for the country in particular.
- In the interest of their freedom of action the USA continue to conduct their campaigns in Afghanistan by themselves – supported by contingents from various countries, among others from Germany, against Al Qaeda and Taliban leaders and caches. The US also activated the cooperation of local commanders who hesitate to cooperate with the Afghan government in Kabul. The confidence of the population declines with regard to the capacities and the willingness of Western countries to make sure that the reconstruction of the country is not jeopardized by local commanders. The effective territorial extension of the UN mission in Afghanistan is urgently needed. Some steps are under way.
- As a consequence of the rejection by the USA of NATO as the venue for political consultations on the situation, the threat and the strategy to be adopted a unique opportunity was missed to establish jointly an intelligence based situation assessment

fed by contributions from almost all national intelligence organizations. It would have been highly probable that the North Atlantic Council would have brought about a broadly supported concept for the strategy to be applied, with some deviations from some Alliance members. That had been the case as well on the occasion of critical decisions taken during the times of the Cold War.

• It would have been important, also to bring about a UN resolution for whatever military or political action in order to cope with potential threats from Iraq – a resolution that would have to be based on a joint assessment – intelligence supported – of the situation in Iraq (WMD; Terrorist links, international aspirations). As a consequence of the unilateral approach chosen by the US a common position could not be worked out within the UN Security Council. The unilateral strategy including the readiness for a pre-emptive strike – supported by a few “willing” countries – rendered it impossible to achieve a legitimising resolution of the UN Security Council. During the Cold War on a number of occasions the Alliance refused to support US military actions for fear of a horizontal escalation from a regional confrontation to a battle in the Centre of Europe. But such a threat does not exist any longer after the end of the cold war. International crises, for instance in Africa constitute security risks not only for the USA but also for other countries – in Europe, Asia and elsewhere (for instance Russia, China, India). In the event of rivalling strategies regarding the crisis, for instance between concepts for crisis management developed in Europe and those of the USA, the chances to bring about a resolution to the crisis decline most certainly – to the detriment of the conflicting partners, and to the detriment of Europe as well as the USA. and of course of others, interested in the conflict.

The cohesion of western response to crisis situations depends to a very large degree on the availability of an assessment of a given situation based on a common intelligence evaluation using such information from all national sources. No government could wish or could afford ignoring common assessments of the Alliance partners. However, in connection with developments in Iraq intelligence was given on a selective basis to individual government with no or with limited intelligence insight of their own in the Iraqi situation. In this way the shaping of a government’s position was influenced with the objective in mind to enlist the country among the “willing” – even irrespective of public opinion in the country. Support was also given in light of the contribution that the United States rendered to the cause of freedom. This again is understandable, but it does not necessarily improve the overall picture of the crisis in question. It forces the government in question to impose the US position on a reluctant public – ignoring among others also the views of the Churches otherwise appreciated on many occasions. To be a member of the North Atlantic Alliance means to contribute to all stages of a decision making process. Membership does not entail the right of any one to ignore the established procedures and to seek separate decisions in order to be able to go ahead, however on shaky grounds. In exceptional circumstances – after failure of the Alliance to develop a common strategy - such alternative roads could be entered – at a price, of course. On the other hand, the European Union, although affected by almost all international crises, could act – after consultation within the Alliance – up to the limits of its capabilities in the European environment, however on the wider international stage the first choice has to be the Alliance. To initiate in competition or confrontation with the USA a separate strategy for the management of such a crisis seems to be counterproductive and in vain. The closeness of the positions of Germany, France and the Russian Federation regarding the initiation of a military campaign were very similar. This was a tactical situation but not the initiation of a strategic alliance. A coherent European position will be an exception, since France and Great Britain are permanent members of the UN Security Council with a veto-power, and they are nuclear

powers of their own. On both issues they act as nations not as members of the European Union or of NATO.

Beyond any doubt, in case the alliance structures and procedures as well as the military facilities were to be used fully Western positions would have generated a much more effective impact on the development in the Near and Middle East. That is not the case today. Today the West is divided on major issues related to the region and – in spite of the road map adopted by the USA, the European Union, the United Nations and the Russian Federation for the settlement of the issues between Israel and Palestine – the West has lost a great deal of credibility among the politically important groupings in the region. This unsatisfactory situation needs to be mended and the situation as well as history teach us how this can be done - also in the interest of the stabilisation of the whole region: There is a need for the recreation of the North Atlantic Alliance as a new Transatlantic Alliance addressing the issues of the Near and Middle East in all sincerity and with a great deal of patience and determination.

In case the Alliance adopts the practice of applying its complex consultation and decision making mechanism and information sharing potential with regard to international crises threatening peace and regional stability it should be feasible to approach the crisis area with consolidated views and procedures. Also like-minded countries or countries concerned could be included into the dialogue and take part in functions adopted for the issues at stake.

With a great deal of disappointment and concern the lack of effective management of the Iraqi crisis during the years 2002 and 2003 has to be noted. The European Union got split on the issues; the USA and Great Britain acted on the basis of poor intelligence, and Germany – through the words of Chancellor Schröder - manoeuvred itself into a corner. Today the new members of the North Atlantic Pact and the new members of the European Union will have to consolidate their views on the Near and Central Middle East – a position that can effectively be handled in their contacts with the partners of the North Atlantic Alliance and of European Institutions.

International Security issues outside Europe dominate the international security agenda at present and probably in the time to come They will also dominate the agenda of the New Transatlantic Alliance and the European Union. In the eighties the agenda of the Western institutions was dominated by the task to “administer the decline of the Soviet Empire”, as was said by Henry Kissinger. In the nineties the settlement on the Balkans and the extension of the Alliance and of the EU dominated the international agenda in Europe. Nowadays, international crises in various parts of the world dominate the Transatlantic and the European agenda.

The Prague NATO Summit in 2002 - while helpful in pushing to the foreground the transformation of the member states' forces for intervention tasks on the international agenda - it did hardly address the underlying political issues. Now it is essential to focus the political consultations on the issues at hand – in Asia, Africa or in South America. There are schools of thought opposing the adoption of such a mandate in the context of the anticipated “New Atlantic Alliance”. Others consider such a goal to be beyond reach and thus un-realistic. The more or less balanced Iran Statement of the European Foreign Ministers on June 21, 2003 could be seen as an important step in the right direction – so to speak at the European end of the spectrum of opinions. The European statement insisted on the full compliance of Iran with the existing international nuclear control mechanism of the IAEA and warned of dire consequences in case of an Iranian rejection. The Foreign Ministers insisted on the

renunciation of Iran of its nuclear weapon program. The statement can be seen as a demonstration of a new understanding of the European Union for security issues beyond the boundaries of Europe.

The development of the Iraqi crisis – driven by a number of unilateral US decisions without using NATO-Consultative mechanisms - and the unstable situation created by the US intervention within the country, but also in the neighbourhood and the whole region as well as for the relationship between the USA and Europe inevitably cause concern and lead to the demand for a strategic new beginning at the political level of the Alliance. On both sides of the Atlantic there is no lack of important voices - notably among analysts, publishers and politicians - who urge governments to undertake a new beginning and to adjust the Alliance to the needs of this century.

In principle, the Alliance members have to replace the perception of the past about the Soviet threat or of the recent years about the threat to stability by the collapse of public order on the Balkans by the notion of crises in other parts of the world affecting or jeopardizing world peace or regional stability. International crises should not be used for political rivalry among member states. The limited means available in the political, military, financial and economic dimension should be used diligently and be optimised to cope with the threat at hand. This was not done on the occasion of the second Gulf war.

The Alliance used quite effectively the advice available from independent and experienced statesmen in order to overcome a critical phase of the alliance, for instance after the Suez –Canal crisis in 1956 and at the time the uprising in Hungary. At that time there was a need, which was met, of better coordinating military and non-military concerns of Alliance partners. In the sixties, the call for detente jeopardized the availability of sufficiently large number of forces. In 1967, the Belgium Foreign Minister Harmel undertook a study to address these questions – together with representatives from member states. It resulted in the new doctrine of the Alliance on “Defence and Détente” and enabled the Alliance to maintain the credibility of their readiness to defend themselves and the credibility of their readiness to seek partial if not general political agreements with the opposing structure in order to reduce the threat of war, enhance the contacts between human beings from both sides, and to open the door to more meaningful trade relations. Now it is of the essence that the classical Alliance, which could accomplish its principal mission - to bring to an end by peaceful means the Cold War in Europe - prepares their agenda for the challenges of this century. The Alliance will have to be in a position to deal politically and otherwise effectively with the crises and risks of the present times and of the future. The disaster created with regard to the pending issues in Iraq by separate and partially opposing unilateral actions on both sides of the Atlantic and as a product of artificial ad hoc alliances serves well as a model telling the observer what to expect from new international crises if the Alliances would not undergo a major re-orientation.

Today there are no common transatlantic strategies regarding a number of crises – not only with regard to Iraq and the Near East.

What could be the mandate of three wise men today?

The group would have to be mandated to work out recommendations for the transformation or re-adjustment of the Alliance to enable it to meet the challenges and to do so for contingencies inside and outside the European Zone.

The group would have to address the following tasks

- Risks for World Peace and stability in the regions

- Security Interests of the member states and of associated countries
- Application of the Washington Treaty of 1959 to the needs of the 21st century,
- Review of the organs and the procedures of the Treaty Organisation
- Establishment of Task Forces (Planning and deployment in rates) for crisis matters
- NATO and the United Nations
- NATO and the European Union
- NATO and the OSCE
- NATO and Key countries of the 21st century.
- Supplementary Protocol to the Washington Treaty of 1949

It would be counterproductive to identify today already suitable personalities for the “Group of Wise Persons (Men/Women)”, however it can be said that various trends regarding the alliance should be taken into account. It is of utmost importance to generate the political will to devise the Alliance in a new form as the one organisation – next to the UN themselves – on which to rely in case of need. The “New Atlantic Alliance” could – based on the experience of the Alliance established in 1949 – be turned into the most effective pillar for world peace – next to the United Nations. Both structures would have complimentary roles to accomplish. In case of failure a new age of nationalism and “unilateralism” in many parts of the world could emerge.

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